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Photo. by LAFAYETTE,

THE COUNTESS OF CRAVEN.

179, New Bond Street.

IN STRAWBERRY FIELDS.

SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE'S "Strawberry Girl" is, perhaps, the sweetest little English child ever painted. No one can resist the half shy upward gaze from beneath the eyelashes of the solemn little epicure, whose feast is just finished from the now empty strawberry basket by her soft little hand. It is the object of the modern strawberry grower to make every child potentially as happy as the lucky little maiden whose portrait hangs on the walls of the National Gallery; for he grows the fruit not by the basket but by the ton, and so gives to almost every "little maid from school" the chance of becoming a "strawberry girl" in the proper season, if she have a penny or two to spend. The enormous increase of good and cheap fruit is one of the great changes for the better in town life, and especially for the children, who were formerly cut off from this the greatest of children's luxuries, in the hottest and most trying months of summer. Now everyone, rich and poor, can get enough, thanks mainly to the fruit farmers, the most enterprising of modern sons of the soil. In the huge supply of fresh strawberries lies, perhaps, the greatest triumph of their art, for the fruit travels badly, and, what is worse, it makes no price if it is the least bruised or stale. But this is a later detail. First grow your strawberries; and when



Photo. by C. Reid, Wishaw

FIRST BEGINNINGS.

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this has to be done on the scale on which it is practised in Kent or Clydesdale, for the London or Glasgow markets, the task, considered as a mere feat of gardening, is quite colossal. That, however, is not the way in which the modern strawberry grower looks on his business. It is *farming*, not gardening, with all the distance between the two that there is between growing peas or beans in a field, or growing them in rows in a border. At the same time, the field-grown strawberry is as large, red, luscious, and agreeable as those forced under glass. You cannot "stick in" your strawberry plants and leave them to grow at will from year to year, or the ground becomes "strawberry-sick" from having too much of a good thing. Consequently the old plants have to be destroyed and fresh ground prepared. On the other hand, no other fruit is so little particular as to the kind of soil in which it grows.

The FIRST BEGINNINGS of the strawberry field are prosaic enough. The ground is "grubbed" and harrowed until it is quite finely divided, after which THE STRAWBERRY PLOUGH is set to work, and the whole field cut into parallel trenches and hills. Note the strength of the big Clydesdale horses in the second picture, and the simple and effective harness which they wear. Instead of straps or thongs, chains are everywhere used for fastenings, with leather flaps below to prevent them rubbing the horses' flanks. The only "running gear" which is not of steel chain are the rope reins.

In the last picture a bed of old plants is in the foreground, while the finishing touch is given to the new beds by the harrow. Close by are the barrows full of manure, with which the trenches will be filled. Beyond is an orchard with currant bushes beneath, and the steep hills of Clyde-side. The whole scene is quite northern, and shows how hardy a plant the strawberry is. There is a story of an epicure who used to begin the strawberry season in Devonshire, and "work north," following the strawberries until he wound up with the latest fruiting plants somewhere on the Highland line in August. At the present time he might have extended the period at which life was to him worth living until late in the autumn. This is due to the introduction of the Alpine strawberry, which goes on flowering and fruiting until the winter frosts kill the blossom. It is not quite so delicious as those wild wood strawberries one gets at French and German railway buffets, but of excellent flavour of its kind. In the great wholesale strawberry fields only those kinds are grown which are hard and travel well. Picking takes place three times a day—at dawn, at midday, and in the evening. The last picking gets to Covent Garden in time to be eaten at breakfast, and the midday picking provides fresh fruit for dessert after dinner.

C. J. CORNISH.



Photo. C. Reid, Wishaw. THE STRAWBERRY PLOUGH.

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Photo. C. Reid, Wishaw. READY FOR PLANTING.

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COUNTRY LIFE ILLUSTRATED.

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COUNTRY NOTES.

WE must look back a good many years to find a parallel to the cold weather of this month. At night ever since the end of April the mercury in the thermometer has on many occasions dropped below freezing point, and this abnormally low temperature has been accompanied by strong winds, often from a very cold quarter. The natural consequences of such inclement and unseasonable weather have made themselves felt in the destruction of the prospects of a good fruit crop,

which at first promised to be much above the average. Reports are most discouraging, and not only with regard to fruit, for early potatoes and other vegetables have been cut to the ground by the same frosts which have wrought havoc in the orchards.

Some adventurous and over-sanguine May fly are reported to have appeared on the Hampshire streams, but, of course, with this cruel prevalence of northerly and easterly winds, the trout-fishing, with fly especially, has been of the poorest, though some good Thames trout have been taken. The agitation in favour of a close time for brown trout in Scotland continues to gain adherents, and it is to be hoped that something may come of it. The Scotch are very jealous, however, about the public right to burn-fishing, and the law will be difficult to enforce even if passed. The Sheriff's Court at Aberdeen has had to read an English keeper a lesson in the difference of the customs of the countries by fining him for breaking the rods of two boys whom he caught trout-fishing on a burn running through his master's ground. We must confess to a whole-hearted sympathy with the boys, nevertheless, we may also confess to a degree of sympathy with the trout and their protection at the proper season.

A great fight on the Carron is recorded by the *Field* between an old angler, Mr. John Cruikshank, and a big salmon, which was finally landed by the old man playing the fish with the line held in his hand. It has been found before now that a fish will fight less keenly against the steady even pull of the line held by the hand than against the perpetual irritation of the steely-sprung rod. The latter seems in some sort to act as a spur and tonic to its flagging energies. The fish, after all, was only a thirty-five pounder, but in prime condition.

Terribly sad news is in the air about the condition of the grouse in Scotland. The dread word "disease" has been more than whispered, and it is said still to be spreading. It is peculiarly unfortunate, because last year so fine a stock of birds was left. True, the grouse were not universally good—"patchy," rather—dying in numbers where there was an absence of springs, but succumbing to drought, simply, without a suspicion of the true disease. It is remarkable that the disease seems to have a way of making its appearance after a favourable year.

That enlightened body, the Vestry of Chelsea, have recently made a very cool proposal, which, it is to be earnestly hoped, will be quite unsuccessful. By way of celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee they suggest that the Apothecaries' Society should relinquish their tenure of the ancient Physic Garden, and that Lord Cadogan, to whom the property would then pass (and it would be of immense value), should dedicate the space to the public as a recreation ground. There is an old Welsh saying, "it is easy to be generous out of the purse of the country"; in like manner there is nothing like celebrating a great occasion, and honouring the Queen, at somebody else's expense. As a matter of fact, no recreation ground is required. Chelsea Hospital Gardens are close by and are open to the public; the Embankment offers an unrivalled parade by the riverside; and Battersea Park, accessible by two bridges, lies immediately across the river. Moreover the slums, for the denizens of which recreation grounds are mainly useful, are rapidly disappearing. Turk's Row is gone, so are the mean houses near the tavern which the great picture of "The News of Waterloo" made famous. The small houses by the west side of the Guards' cricket ground at Burton Court are also condemned. Meanwhile the Physic Garden, though its value for the cultivation of medicinal herbs is probably not great, is a precinct in which many birds harbour. Thrushes, blackbirds, robins, wrens, wood pigeons, and one or two others have been observed there even in 1897, and, as an open space free from the invasion of the multitude, it fulfils the function of a lung for London far better than it would if the populace had a free entry to it.

The *London Gazette* of May 7th contains a new order to be known as "The Importation of Dogs Order, 1897." It is issued by the Board of Agriculture, and is to come into force on 15th September next. It is thereby enacted that dogs brought to Great Britain from any other country (except Ireland or the Isle of Man) shall not be landed without a licence from the Board. The conditions under which these licences can be obtained, and the penalties incurred by a breach of the order, are fully set forth, and no complaint can be made that it is not far-reaching enough in respect of the persons who will be deemed offenders in the case of a dog being landed contrary to regulation. The list includes "the owner, and the charterer, and the master of the vessel, the owner of the animal, the person for the time being in charge thereof, the person causing, directing, or permitting the landing, the person landing the same, and the consignee or other person receiving or keeping it (with a guilty knowledge)." But if the order is necessary, why is the whole summer allowed to elapse before the order is to be put into force?

There has hardly been an important racing event of the present season which might not have been summed up in the words, another triumph for the line of Stockwell. The Royal Two Year Old Plate at Kempton Park is one of the latest instances, for Chon Kina, the winner, is by Saraband, who claims direct descent from Stockwell. It is worthy of notice, too, that Saraband's dam, Highland Fling, is inbred to Touchstone, being by Scottish Chief out of Masquerade, who goes back to that horse on her dam's side, and now that Saraband has left the country, he will, as seems almost always to be the rule, probably have plenty of good winners running for him. Chon Kina is a nice active sort of youngster, with capital limbs. He is a bit peacocky at present, perhaps, and he walked about in the paddock after his race as if he had had nothing to do to win, which he did by a neck from Dielytra. He is a gelding, which is all in his favour, and even if he is never as good a race-horse as his sire was—it may be that, like that horse, he was foaled in a very good year of thoroughbreds—he will prove a bit more than useful, and make a good hard, wearing sort, who will go on winning races, in his own class, for some time to come.

Dielytra, who is by Melanion, from Venus's Looking Glass, has bad forelegs, but The Reeve, by Goldfinch—Nemesis, is a grand colt, that will, with time, improve considerably on his Kempton running. Greenan is a light leggy St. Simon, and ran like a non-stayer, but Nun Nicer, by Common out of Priestess, is a good sort of filly, and will win a race soon. The best-looking of the whole lot, however, was Bittern, a long low chestnut, with white legs, by Gallinule—Hirondelle. He has plenty of size, and looks like growing into a big powerful colt of the orthodox Irish type. He was quiet enough in the paddock, and waited for the gates to be opened without the slightest sign of nervousness, but he got upset by the crowd when he came out on to the course, and sadly misbehaved himself. He had just started off to canter down quietly when he shied at some men standing on his near side, opposite the paddock end of the carriage enclosures. He then swerved back again from the people in the passage, gave two bounds, and a kick, which landed Garrett on to his neck, and then one more, which sent the jockey flying.

It was not a question of temper at all, but simply a case of nervousness, easily to be understood in a high-couraged colt, introduced, for the first time, to the uproar of a racecourse. Captain Greer's colt galloped about loose for some time before he was caught, so that it is not to be wondered at that he again misbehaved at the post, where he once more got rid of his pilot, smashed through the rails, and galloped away "on his own." Fortunately he was soon caught again and brought back, and when the flag at last fell, he got off well enough, and ran fast for some way, but of course all chance of his winning had been destroyed by his previous escapades. Greenan ran well to the distance, where he died out, and then Dielytra looked like winning till Chon Kina challenged about a hundred yards from home, and after an exciting finish won a good race by a neck, with Sir Blundell Maple's filly, Nun Nicer, third.

Count Schomberg, who won the Chester Cup, is another of this year's winners who is inbred to Stockwell, and full of Bird-catcher blood. As they came into the straight it looked as if Piety would win if he could beat Shaddock, but no sooner had the "Count" got an opening than he bore down on them with a wet sail, and going a tremendous pace at last, collared Piety fifty yards from home, and beat him by a neck, with Shaddock, three lengths off, third. The winner has been a cheap purchase to his present owner, who gave 3,000 guineas for him at the sale of the late Colonel Lloyd's horses, as he straightway went over to Paris and won the Auteuil Grand Hurdle Race, since which he has only once known defeat, namely, in last year's Cesarewitch, when he had the substantial weight of 8st. 4lb. on his back.

If the superiority of the bat over the ball continues to increase at the present rate, the sort of suggestions that were prevalent in the last Jubilee year will again become rife. Some wished to heighten the stumps, some to narrow the bat, and some to alter the leg-before-wicket rule in favour of the bowler—together with several other analogous horrors. For though previously a thousand runs have been made by individual cricketers before May was out, and last year Ranjitsinhji amassed a record total for a season, no previous period can compare with the opening of the present year. Centuries are nothing accounted of in the presence of several more gigantic performances.

Between the four double centuries scored last week it is difficult to distinguish in point of merit. Mr. Dixon's 268 not out can claim to be the biggest score of the four, and establishes a record for the Trent Bridge ground. Sussex were the victims; not for the first time in similar cases. It was on the Hove ground that J. G. Mordaunt, then captain of Oxford, made well over 200, and Cambridge owe their record score of over 700 to

the same unfortunate bowlers. At Nottingham, Dixon was somewhat helped by the effect of rain and cold on the fielding side, but the merit of the feat is beyond all question. More lively and well-timed hitting on the off-side has seldom been seen.

Ranjitsinhji scored eight runs less than the Nottinghamshire captain, and lost his wicket, but his innings will rank as one of the most brilliant ever played. He gave no chance—in spite of the reporters—for though two of his late cuts were not absolutely on the ground, neither could have been taken by any fielder. He was, moreover, playing against the finest bowler in England in J. T. Hearne, who was supported by two others of the first rank, yet he was never even in difficulties, and without, apparently, hitting out, scored at a really marvellous rate. In watching his innings it was more than ever apparent that he owes his skill chiefly to an altogether Eastern suppleness of wrist, which enables him to play the ball much later than is possible for others. Of the many fine strokes he is master of, none is so typical as his "slide" to leg, which he appears to accomplish with consummate ease of balls that are both straight and of good length. His runs were made at the rate of about one a minute, and his companions scored 100 while he was making 260. The comparison is especially eloquent if it be considered that Murdoch was his partner for a great part of the time.

The end of Abel's consistency was thought to have been reached last year when he began with three consecutive centuries. His first four innings this year have totalled 500 runs. The mere figures are the best comment. The two young amateurs of the Surrey team, Mr. Leveson-Gower and Mr. Chinnery, both did themselves justice, and will be regular members of the side. It is pleasing to learn that Mr. Key has no intention of retiring for some time, and also to see that his hitting powers so famous in Oxford days are still "in the green."

Their captain and the Cambridge eleven have surpassed even the greatness of their several reputations. Druce's score of 227 may be said to be the one topic of conversation in the 'Varsity. Besides being a record for Fenners in respect of first-class cricket, the innings was remarkable for the unique power it represented. While Hirst was bowling, he had not only an extra man on the off-side, but also a deep cover within ten yards of the boundary; the pace, however, of Druce's off strokes was such that the extra men hardly reduced the rate of scoring, although Druce continued to make his runs on the same side.

Mr. Thornton's team was, perhaps, a little weak. With the exception of Hirst and Woodcock there was no good bowler on the side, and lobbs were resorted to at a very early period, even in the first innings. The bowler, curiously, was A. J. L. Hill, who a few years ago was noted at Cambridge for his fast and fiery deliveries. The change to a gentler style was hardly successful enough to warrant its continuance. The success of the Cambridge bowlers was as signal as it was unexpected. Shine, Jessop (who is even faster than last year), De Zoete, and Fernie, the freshman, all bowled excellently in both innings, though the collapse of the scratch team in the second innings was, in great measure, due to the weariness of a long day in the field. But it must also be remembered that Wilson, almost the best bowler, as well as the best bat, in the Cambridge team, was absent through an injury to his knee.

The composition of the eleven is made easier by the match. Stogdon, by his two good innings, as well as by his century in the Seniors, has earned his place. In fact, the same eleven will probably meet Oxford, except that Wilson will displace one of the bowlers. The younger Grace is not in residence, as has been incorrectly reported, nor is there any justification for saying that Mitchell will be required to play. There is too much present talent to make it either advisable or fair to call up an old Blue.

The Freshmen's match, at Oxford, showed the existence of a quantity of batting talent, but a complete absence of bowlers. For the moment it looks as if last year's bowlers would not have even a modicum of new talent to support them against Cambridge. Of all the bowlers tried none came out with a good analysis, and none got more than three wickets except Carter, who was, however, the most expensive of all. Judging by style, in the absence of performance, Fisher will be worth trying again. He has a nice high action, keeps a very steady length, and can make the ball turn a good deal. He has a great school reputation, and has bowled well in college matches.

Taking the Seniors' and the Freshmen's matches together, it is clear that there are enough good bats in residence to make a good team. Eccles well sustained his last year's reputation; in his score of 101 for Quinton's side, he gave no chance, though he was at times almost painfully slow. He was in this way a great contrast to Montmorency, whose fine free innings of 93 should

make him certain of a trial. Porch failed to come off, but had just made a very attractive century in college cricket. Both he and Bannon will certainly be given another trial in the Parks, and with a view to such cases Bardswell has wisely changed the usual fixture of the Eleven *versus* Sixteen Freshmen into a trial game between picked sides, including both Seniors and Freshmen.

The only noteworthy failure among the freshmen was Champain, who came up with the reputation of being the best bat Cheltenham has produced for many years. But a failure in one match means nothing. It is, however, a captain's most difficult task at the 'Varsities to give the freshmen a sufficient trial. There is no time for more than one or two trial games, and college cricket is, after all, not much test of real ability. School reputations also, whether for capacity or the reverse, as often as not bear no just relation to later merit. Wicket-keepers were much to the fore; no less than five of Cunliffe's side were stumped, three by Martyn and two by Henley. Moreover, both Fox and Mathews, among the Seniors, have shown superior ability.

The prospects of Oxford cricket are receiving a most pleasing and unexpected stimulus. Waddy began the process by realising the remote possibility expressed last week, and suddenly appearing from the blue, unannounced, but most welcome. He is the only steady fast bowler in residence, and is a most effective bat, though not beautiful to watch. But an even better thing than the certainty of Waddy has appeared in the high probability of Hartley being available. A careful inspection of the dates of the different papers in the Army examination has revealed the likelihood that, after all, Oxford will have the benefit of his bowling in the Inter-'Varsity match, though not in many of the earlier matches.

The legal profession has often laid claim to great athletic capacity. A late discovery, that as many as four Appellate Judges, including one half of the Court of Appeal, are old rowing Blues, has suggested the idea of gathering together as representative a body as possible of famous oarsmen in celebration of the fact. A dinner is, therefore, to be held on May 31st, at which the Master of the Rolls, Lord Macnaghten, Lord Justice A. L. Smith, and Lord Justice Chitty are to be the chief guests. The Provost of Eton is to be in the chair. To the general committee, Oxford and Cambridge have each supplied thirty-four representatives, who include almost all the best-known oars of the last fifty years. Dudley Ward and L. K. Phillips will be present as representatives of the present.

Lord Esher, as W. B. Brett, rowed in the third race for Cambridge; Chitty, at Oxford, and Macnaghten, at Cambridge, were contemporaries, and were in opposing crews in the early fifties, and A. L. Smith rowed first in 1857. Of these "Joe" Chitty, as he was always known, was the most renowned, as he was that *rara avis*, a double Blue, having captained the Eleven, as well as rowed for his University. For over twenty years he umpired the Boat Race, and has been a prominent officer in the "Devil's Own," as well as a sterling athlete.

At last, to the general peace and prosperity of Cambridge rowing, a comely silence has fallen upon the disputing coaches. The last word belongs to Mr. R. C. Lehmann. As the coach of many successful Oxford crews, he speaks with authority and without prejudice. In a letter to Mr. J. B. Close, he boldly states his conviction, which he says is shared by every Oxford oar who saw the Cambridge May crews practising or racing, that the First Trinity crew were greatly superior in style and effect to any other crew at Cambridge. He concludes by selecting "a neglected beginning" as the cardinal sin of late Cambridge crews, and expresses surprise that a recent authority had defended this very fault. What is well begun, it seems in rowing also, is most likely to finish well. To the amicable settlement of the disputes, the Hall men have chiefly contributed by themselves, seconding for the post of president and of secretary non-Hall candidates.

The crews for the May races are now becoming interesting, as most have just got into their light boats. One of the chief features of the practice this year is the great number of old Blues who have come up to coach, in consequence of the supposed depression in Cambridge rowing. Almost a plethora of talent is to be met on the banks. Among others, G. Elin, S. Fairbairn, A. S. Bell, R. T. Jones, L. H. Bushe-Fox, and Hon. R. Guinness were all taking in hand different boats. The general effect on the improvement of the crews is already becoming apparent. There should be some excellent racing among the first few boats, though many changes are not likely. Third Trinity have shown the most marked improvement of any boat, since Dudley Ward has gone seven, and have some hopes of going higher than their present position of fifth. In the Second Division, Queen's will probably go up with a rush.

The first three boats at Oxford will also probably retain their respective places. New College have been compelled to make up their boat without G. O. Edwards, who has not yet recovered the accident to his wrist, but they are still too good to have much fear of Trinity. It was thought at one time that Trinity would certainly fall to Magdalen, who are rowing four Blues. But owing to the unfortunate loss of Graham they have been forced to reorganise the boat. They have, in this difficulty, adopted a dubious principle in importing an old Blue, in the person of Sherwood, into the boat. In all other departments of athletics the law for qualification is clearly laid down that no one is available after his twelfth term after matriculation, but in rowing nothing at all is mentioned on the subject, and from time to time both 'Varsities have employed fifth year men. But the practice is an anomaly and the principle bad, and the sooner a change is made the better. Of the other boats University have an excellent stroke in Wilkinson, and are well together.

The death of Mr. T. H. E. Stretch removes a fine young oarsman, who had already gained the highest honours in aquatics, having rowed in the winning Oxford crews of 1894 and 1895, and last year in the Leander eight at Henley, the crew which won the Grand Challenge Cup after defeating in a preliminary heat Yale University, *not* Harvard, as was rather generally reported this week. Mr. Stretch would undoubtedly have retained his place this year, as he was only twenty-two and in the very prime of life as an oarsman. He was a grand man for the centre of a boat, scaling over 13st. last year, while his height (he was over six feet) rendered him a perfect specimen of young English manhood. He was, too, immensely popular with all who knew him, and he will be as deeply mourned as was another member of the 1894 Oxford crew, Mr. H. B. Cotton.

This is a year of exhibitions. That which was opened by the Prince and Princess of Wales on Monday last at the Imperial Institute, under the title of the Yachting and Fisheries Exhibition, is sure to prove a great attraction, not only to yachtsmen and fishermen, but equally as much to the casual observer and non-expert, who will find many items of great interest among the innumerable exhibits. There was a private view of the exhibition last Saturday, which gave a better chance of picking out the good things, although, of course, the "moving" portion of the entertainment was absent. This was reserved until the opening day, and includes demonstrations of life-saving by rocket apparatus, divers at work, and animated photographs showing H.R.H. the Prince of Wales on board his yacht Britannia.

One of the principal features of the exhibition is an exceptionally fine model, measuring some dozen yards in length, of the River Thames from the source to the mouth, with the adjacent country all drawn to scale. It is a working model, and is quite an object lesson in the topography of the Thames. Another model, and one of considerable interest to yachtsmen, is that which shows at a glance the improvement in our coast illumination since 1837. The idea emanated from the Duke of York, Master of the Trinity House, and the suggestions of H.R.H. have been admirably carried out. Another feature for yachtsmen is the collection of models of famous racing clippers of all rigs, and a fine collection of trophies which have been won since Her Majesty's accession, chief amongst the latter being those secured by the Prince of Wales. But it is to Waltonians that the exhibition will prove particularly attractive. The section is full of interesting objects for followers of "the gentle art," either in sea or river, and all are so good that it is impossible to particularise, as it also must be to enumerate the whole, numbering as they do upwards of 2,000. Suffice it to say that the show is one complete in every sense of the word, and should prove a great success amongst the exhibitions of the year.

The ways of making a livelihood are manifold. The time of year is at hand when, in country rides round and about London, one may see a man with a long landing-net scooping away at a roadside pond. You might take him for a collector of water insects, a naturalist purely; but his interests are not scientific. He is occupied with getting his living, and with getting a living for other things too. He is catching frogs. These frogs are not for human food, either English or French, but for the condiment of certain snakes of the Hamadryad family at the Zoo. Some of these creatures are so particular that even a good lively frog will not do for them—they would starve rather than touch anything dead—and for these ultra-particular ones nothing will serve but a live one of their own genus—some kind of live snake. So the catching of snakes for these cannibals (grass snakes, for the most part, but they will not despise a viper) is the special business of a rather famous character in the New Forest—"Brusher" Mills by name. He is on as intimate terms with snakes as any man in India, but his methods of charming them are drastic and European rather than Oriental. Still, they need to be caught and kept alive,

HIPPIAS.

OUR PORTRAIT ILLUSTRATION.

THE COUNTESS OF CRAVEN, whose portrait appears on the frontispiece, is American by birth, and, like many of the American girls who have married titled Englishmen, brought a large fortune to her husband. As she is, in addition, young and charming, the Earl naturally received innumerable congratulations at the time of his wedding, which took place in 1893. The Countess's name is the classic one of Cornelia. She is the only daughter of Mr. Bradley Martin, who has become the owner of the large estate of Balmacaan in Inverness. The date of the earldom is the first year of the present century, but the barony is an old one, the creation being 1666. The country seats of the Earl are Combe Abbey, Coventry; Hamstead-Marshall; and Ashdown Park, Lambourn, Berks.

ON THE GREEN.

THERE was some unfortunate little misunderstanding about the professional meeting at Wallasey, on the Thursday of last week, and, in consequence, the names of some of the would-be competitors arrived too late to be entered. However, the name of the champion, Harry Vardon, arrived all in good time, and his form at Wallasey was of the highest championship standard throughout. He began, in practice, with an extraordinary round of seventy-one, which lowered all previous records of the green, and followed this up with a seventy-seven for his first round on the competition day. No one bettered this; but George Pulford, of Hoylake, equalled it. Herd, Braid, and Nicholls were equal at a stroke more. In his next round, Vardon went one better, and won the first prize with a total of 151, Herd and Pulford tying for second and third at 154. This course at Wallasey deserves to be better known than it is. It lies somewhere on that south shore of the Mersey estuary that stretches from Birkenhead to Hoylake, and there are many who regard it as a better green even than the famous Royal Liverpool Club's course. It has some features of greater boldness, but there is a large number of holes to which the approaches are "blind."

Taylor—the open champion of 1894 and 1895, from whom the aforesaid Harry Vardon only wrested the championship in 1896 after a tie, at Muirfield—signalled his appearance at Hoylake by going round the course in seventy-three, rather a startling score, which is reported as tying the previous medal record. But since the course has been a good deal altered since that medal record was made, and seeing that the alterations had resulted, according to the opinion of most folk, in making the course more difficult, the effect of Taylor's effort was to make all other achievements look rather small by the side of it. There is a law of compensation, however, and before the day was out, he had engaged in a three-ball match with Mr. Ball and Mr. Laidlay, which the former amateur won easily from both his opponents, and so restored the balance to something like the equilibrium which Taylor had upset. Mr. Ball showed himself also as the agent of retributive justice on the second medal day of the club's meeting; for on the first day Mr. Hilton had won the medal very easily, with a good score of seventy-eight, in the face of a strongish easterly breeze. So easily had he won, that Mr. Hutchings, who was second to him, was six strokes more. But on the second day (a better day for scoring, however), Mr. Ball set himself to work, and beat Mr. Hilton's score of the former medal day by a stroke; thus winning the medal, though far less easily than Mr. Hilton the previous one. For the latter had many strokes, but Mr. Ball only one stroke, to spare, and had three opponents treading on his heels at that close range of two strokes behind, namely, Mr. Hilton (once more), Mr. Laidlay, and Mr. Graham. In playing off the tie, Mr. Hilton won with a good steady round of eighty-one. These scores incline one to suppose that the course as altered cannot really be more difficult than the old course when at its full length, for though the medal record for that course is stated to have been seventy-three, at which Taylor did the newer course, yet the writer has a suspicion that this seventy-three was not recorded on the medal course at its fullest length, but, on the contrary, that a medal record was created for that old fully-stretched course by Mr. Ball's seventy-six of last autumn meeting, which he scored in something like half a gale of wind.

Lord Rosebery spoke with a delightfully breezy sense of irresponsibility at the meeting of the Edinburgh Burgers Golfing Society when he opened their new clubhouse for them. He spoke as one who is neither a Prime Minister nor a golfer, and in the absence of these limitations his humour flowed very pleasantly. Mr. A. M. Ross was the winner of the club's spring medal, competed for on the same occasion, with a fine score of eighty. He holed the third hole, considerably over a quarter of a mile in length, in three strokes. His closest rival was Mr. J. Henderson with eighty-three.

On the final day of the week Harry Vardon again did remarkably fine work at Southport, winning the thirty-six hole scoring competition with seventy-nine and seventy-six, his finish being tremendously strong. J. H. Taylor was a good second with eighty and seventy-eight.

CYCLING NOTES.

THE Cycling Club at Sheen House looks as if it ought to be a success. It has a good committee of the right sort of people for the purpose, and the meeting on Saturday was well attended, although the race track was not yet in order. The grounds are so pretty, and the run down to Richmond is such a comfortable one from the West End, that it ought to be a very popular resort. One gets wood pavement, and wood pavement in decent order at the present time (which does not always happen), nearly all the way, till one crosses the river, and there is only a little bit of High Street, Kensington, that is always narrow and crowded.

The Isthmian Library volume on Cycling has some practical hints on the choice of a cycle, and on taking care of it after you have chosen it. Like many another book, it would have been twice as good had it been half as long, but it is easy to skip the parts that are not useful. It even tells you how to build a bicycle; but the best advice to the amateur mechanic who is about to build his own bicycle is, beyond question, the proverbial "Don't." Buy one instead. What particular manner of "bike" you should buy is "another story."

There are so many that are good. There seems to be a prejudice against

the bamboo cycle, and of course all the Tufal Cains, the metal-workers of the bicycle world, are against them. They would not be human if they were not; but still the writer can testify (quite unsolicited) that he (or she) rode one for some time with great satisfaction, and found it certainly not inferior to the things of metal. That it was the Van Houten of bicycles—"best and goes farthest"—one is not prepared, perhaps, to say; but is one disposed to put any make—even an Elswick, say—on such a pinnacle? Of course everyone thinks his or her own "bike" the best in the world—that goes without saying. The election to first rank would have to be decided by the votes for second place, after the manner of the victory of Themistocles in the voting after Salamis.

The Simpson chain is another object of the derisive comment of many a maker. It is not a bad chain. Of this, too, the writer has made full and satisfactory trial. It is not a neat chain, to be sure, and when enclosed in a gear case it gives the bicycle rather the aspect of an old lady in a poke-bonnet; but it works very smoothly, and the noise which sometimes attends it is only a consequence of ill-adjustment. Its chief drawback is the trouble of keeping it clean; but all chains are a bother. It is enough to drive a rider, if a man, to a Crypto, which also has its merits.

And, even if a woman, it is well to try to keep an equal mind, even towards a sister in knickerbockers. But, really, bicycling skirts are made so neatly nowadays that the eccentricity of knickerbockers is just a little unpardonable. Of course one does not speak of the remote country or the Highlands, where a splashed skirt is a nuisance, high winds are prevalent, and there is an absence of human kind. In the neighbourhood of London, and in civilisation generally, the Sandford skirt, as remodelled, is surely convenient and neat enough. It was always a joy to ride in, but the cut of the model gave the skirt a curious look when one was afoot. The new modelling has changed all that, and it is equally delightful for walking and riding.

A correspondent, writing from the North of England, who, at the same time, forwards copies of the books he refers to, which are certainly very well got up, says: "For the benefit of anyone who may cycle North, in consequence of reading your article in COUNTRY LIFE of last week on the Yorkshire dales, you may be glad to know that the North-Eastern Railway Company publish some most excellent guides to the district, and that they make special arrangements for tourists at reduced fares during the summer season."

LAST WEEK'S POLO.

THERE was plenty of Polo all last week at Ranelagh, where the Handicap Tournament was in full swing; and on Saturday two good matches were got through in the presence of a large number of spectators. The first two teams to "fall in" were the Quidnuncs, represented by Mr. Marjoribanks, Mr. G. A. Miller, Mr. A. Rawlinson, and Mr. Buckmaster (back), and the Ranelagh Club, for whom Mr. C. D. Miller, Major Fenwick, Mr. E. D. Miller, and Mr. J. Dryborough (back) did battle. This produced a very exciting struggle, which resulted in favour of Ranelagh by five goals to four.

The next match was between the Royal Horse Guards and Ranelagh, the sides being Captain Fitzgerald, Mr. C. E. Rose, Mr. R. Ward, and Mr. R. F. Molyneux (back), for the Blues; and the Earl of Longford, Mr. W. H. Lambton, Mr. W. Walker, and Sir H. de Trafford (back) for Ranelagh. The soldiers were a very strong, well-mounted team, and in spite of their opponents' efforts, and some very fine runs on the part of Mr. W. Walker, they kept the ball at the Ranelagh end of the ground during most of the game. Sir H. de Trafford was in great form, and Mr. Walker scored twice in the last ten minutes, but at the call of time the visitors had won by six goals to two.

There were two matches at Hurlingham on Wednesday, the first being between the 15th Hussars and the Scots Greys. For the former, who were Red, Mr. J. Knowles, Mr. E. H. Bald, Captain Dundas, and Major de Crespigny rode on to the ground; whilst the Scots Greys (White) were represented by Captain Middleton, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Collins, and Mr. T. Conolly. The wind had dried up the ground a good deal, and it was in very good order, but the game was, nevertheless, terribly slow at times. Play had not long begun before Bald made a good run, and scored first blood for the Fifteenth, and then Dundas nearly scored again. The Hussars continued to press the Dragons vigorously, but Middleton was playing in fine form, and Conolly, who was riding a clever white-legged pony, saved more than one goal. This period ended by the "Heavies" claiming a foul, and the Hussars having to go back to their goal to hit off.

Play had no sooner recommenced than it was stopped again for a few minutes by an accident to Dundas, and on being resumed Bald made a good run, which was cleverly stopped by Collins. Dundas, riding a very fast dun, was well backed up by Knowles, on a chestnut, and twice, in quick succession, the Whites' goal was in jeopardy. Harrison, who was riding The Boy, next scored for the "Heavies," and brought the score up to one goal all, and in the fourth period they nearly scored again, after which a determined rush by the Reds resulted in another goal for them.

The game was very slow for the rest of the time, though the Reds scored in the fourth period, and in the fifth Dundas, riding Pembroke, made a good run and hit another goal for his side. The close of the match was marked by two vigorous attacks by the Hussars, both of which nearly resulted in goals, and when the bell rang they were declared the winners by six goals to one.

A very good match was next played between a team of Captain Renton's and one of Mr. Buckmaster's, the former playing himself, Messrs. G. A. and E. D. Miller, and Mr. Dryborough (back); and the latter, Messrs. W. Walker, A. Rawlinson, C. D. Miller, and himself (back). These were two very good teams indeed, and the match was quite one of the fastest seen this year. Mr. G. A. Miller played Rasker, Sandow, and Slavin; Captain Renton, Matchbox and Langosta; Mr. E. D. Miller, Napper, Mainspring, one of Mr. Mackey's, and The Baron; Mr. Dryborough his fast weight-carrying grey, Lord Dalmahy; Mr. C. D. Miller, Caesar and Chatterbox; and Mr. Walker his well-known four, Dynamite, Jane, Cicely, and Nimble. This was a great match, and ended in the victory of Captain Renton's side by eight goals to one.

At Hurlingham, on Saturday, the home club played a drawn game with Aldershot, and then defeated the Chislehurst Club by seven goals to three. There will be plenty going on both at Hurlingham and Ranelagh next week. The former will oppose the Stansted Polo Club on Monday, and on Saturday, after the Blues have played the Scots Greys, there will be a driving competition. At Ranelagh, the Cavalry Club will play the 1st Life Guards on Monday; on Wednesday the Scots Greys will try to defeat the same regiment; and on Saturday there will be a match between a Buenos Ayres team and the 1st Life Guards, which will be followed by a Gymkhana.

CHAUGAN,

POLO AT RANELAGH.

THE opening of another polo season is always a source of pleasure to those who love the rattle of the sticks and the thud of ponies' hoofs upon the turf. That it is a grand game to play will be denied by no one who has ever had a stick in his hand and a good pony between his legs, whilst its popularity as a game to watch increases every year. Fortunately the Saturday on which the season was formally opened at Hurlingham and Ranelagh was fine and bright, and as I stood watching the first match of the season, what a host of memories it recalled of great matches I have seen in the past, and of good men and ponies who took part in them. There is no game which so much promotes the feeling of *camaraderie* among the members of a team as that of polo, and for years afterwards one remembers, with a thrill of joy, the "pal" who backed one up in the nick of time, the "back" who saved our goal when all seemed lost, and the grand combined rush over the ground which ended in a winning goal for the old regiment.

But to return to the present. An inspection of Hurlingham and Ranelagh soon showed the many improvements which have been made at both places during the winter. Those at the latter club, having been fully



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IN THE CENTRE.

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IN FULL PLAY.

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A THROW IN.

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COMING BACK TO CHANGE PONIES.

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described last week, need not be again mentioned here, but at Hurlingham I may say that both grounds have been well cared for and improved, whilst some very useful additions have been made to the pavilion, and an excellent stable has been built for measuring.

It was here that Sir H. Simpson, V.S., the official measurer, attended by Captain W. Smythe, who has presided over the destinies of Hurlingham polo for, I think, nearly twenty years, and Mr. Gerald Hardy, representing the committee, spent the greater part of the morning in passing ponies under the standard; and certainly the increasing popularity of the game, and the eagerness of its followers to get the best ponies, could not be better instanced than by the number and varying description of those that paraded for measurement. Among them were the wiry, hard-looking Argentine, the thick-set, plain-headed American, the shapely, blood-like Arab, and the big English blood pony, to which last, when you get him good, there is no other to compare. I have often wondered why it is that none of our polo enthusiasts have ever gone in for Walers, as my experience of them in India was that they were very fast and good.

However, the measuring having been satisfactorily disposed of, lunch was the next event of the day, and then the 15th Hussars turned out to oppose a powerful Hurlingham Club team, consisting of Mr. Conolly, Mr. Gerald Hardy, Lord Harrington, and Sir H. Rawlinson. The visitors were a very fast team, and although they were no match for their opponents on this occasion, and suffered defeat by six goals to one, they fought hard for victory, and will make a strong team with practice. There were some very good ponies played during the afternoon, Lord Harrington riding his well-known black mare, Ambassador, Mr. Gerald Hardy Gamecock and Sailor, and Sir H. Rawlinson a very good-looking and clever grey, Lyra—whilst I also noticed the very smart chestnut, Nappa, belonging, if I remember rightly, to Mr. Conolly.

At Ranelagh, on the same afternoon, Mr. E. D. Miller, Mr. E. B. Shephard, Mr. T. Dryborough, and Captain Renton made up a strong team for the "Over Thirties," and had one goal the best of the "Under Thirties," represented by Mr. W. Jones, Mr. C. D. Miller, Mr. G. A. Miller, and Mr. W. Buckmaster. At the conclusion of this match, which showed us some really good polo, there was a very even and hotly-contested match between the Royal Horse Guards and the Ranelagh Club. The former were represented by Mr. Molyneux, Major Fenwick, Captain Fitzgerald, and Mr. C. E. Rose; whilst Captain Milner, Lord Kensington, Lord Shrewsbury, and Sir Humphrey de Trafford wore the Ranelagh Red. The visitors, who were a



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A RUN DOWN.

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Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

HITTING OUT.

Copyright—"C.L."

very well-mounted team, strove hard for victory, Major Fenwick leading the attack with great vigour and determination throughout, especially when riding his wonderful chestnut Fritz, whilst Mr. Rose, who played Yellow Boy and another very good pony, was equally clever in defence. At the call of time they had each got one goal, and as the ground was very heavy, after the previous night's rain, both sides preferred not to play it out, and the match was drawn.

On the following Monday, Comté de Madre, Mr. F. Belville, Mr. Harrild, and Mr. Schrubber, for Ranelagh, opposed Lord Longford, who has been going wonderfully well with the Pytchley this season, Mr. Hargreaves, Mr. Menzies, and Mr. Dryborough, for the Quidnuncs, and this, too, ended in a tie, both sides having scored two goals when time was called.

On the Wednesday there would have been a great match between the 1st Life Guards and Ranelagh had not rain unfortunately prevented it, but Saturday was a glorious afternoon, and two good matches were brought off. The first of these was between the Scots Greys, who played Mr. T. Conolly, Captain Middleton, Mr. Harrison, and Captain Bulkeley Johnson; and a strong Ranelagh team, consisting of Mr. Bentley, Mr. Harrild, Mr. W. Walker, and Mr. C. D. Miller. The club were better mounted than the soldiers, and always having the best of it, beat them by six goals to three.

The Rugby Club next sent a very strong team, consisting of Mr. W. Jones, Captain Renton, Mr. E. D. Miller, and Mr. W. J. Dryborough, on to the ground to oppose the Ranelagh Club, represented by Mr. Balfour, Mr. G. A. Miller, Mr. E. B. Shephard, and Mr. Buckmaster. This was a great



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A TRIAL OF SPEED.

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Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

AN INTERVAL

Copyright—"COUNTRY LIFE."

match, and ended in favour of the visitors by seven goals to four. On the same day, at Hurlingham, the married members of the club suffered a two goals defeat from the bachelors; and then the Royal Horse Guards, after a very exciting game, tied the home club, with the score at two goals all.

This is a brief *resumé* of the present polo season, which has

commenced most auspiciously. Most of last season's best-known players are playing again, and among the ponies Lord Shrewsbury's Elstow, Aerolite, and Shooting Star are all in good form, and as there is a good list of fixtures at both clubs, we shall see plenty of interesting play before the season ends.

CHANGAN.

SWALLOWS.

IN the lines which follow, and in the title that precedes them, the word "Swallows" is used from time to time in the familiar rather than the scientific sense. Our accomplished artist has avoided the popular error of confounding the house-martin and the swallow. At first sight THE CUP OF SUN-BAKED CLAY looks far more like the home of the house-martin than that of the swallow. It lies, be it observed, against the sheer wall of a house, of which the eave is probably one course of bricks higher than the top of the picture, and such, in this country, is almost invariably the site of the house-martin's nursery, whereas the chimney-swallow, which is the true swallow, almost invariably chooses an enclosed place to build in when breeding with us. The swallow's nest is, as the name implies, frequently found in chimneys, but the investigation of chimneys is a tedious business, and the form of swallow's nest which presents itself most frequently to the observer is that which lies between the rafter and the roof of an outhouse, a stable, a byre, or even a pig-stye. Still, the markings on the white ground of the eggs, which would be reddish-brown and lilac, if one could see the colour, betray the true swallow, and that keen observer, Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, has noted the peculiar fact that whereas the swallow in England always, or almost always, chooses one of the positions described, the continental swallow, more often than not, builds as the "temple-haunting Martlet" builds in England. Still, since there are pedants in the world, men who speak familiarly of "gold-dusted Snapdragon" as *Antirrhinum*, and of Creeping Jenny as *Lysimachia Nummularia*, it may be well to bear in mind the fact that the nests we cherish on our houses are mostly those of house-martins, and that the gentle twittering which salutes us so pleasantly on summer mornings comes also from their throats. On the other hand, the full-grown swallow, with his red-brown throat and his long forked tail, is the handsomer and, it may be suspected, the swifter and more dashing bird; but on this point it is prudent to speak with reserve, for few things are more difficult to estimate with precision than the pace at which birds fly.

Both swallow and house-martin are expert members of the Plasterers' Union. They learned to make sun-dried bricks before the Egyptian taskmasters forced that lesson on the Hebrews. They knew the secret of the adobe before the Mexicans, or even the Aztecs, dreamed of it. The sun-baked cup is formed of little lumps of mud collected from puddles in the road and from the edge of pond or stream, and, in this merry month of May, you may see the swallows of 1897 making their globular bricks with the same assiduous care which has been practised by their ancestors for countless generations. Again, as the everlasting plaster of days gone by was mixed with horse-hair to give it toughness, so the swallow introduces tough grass and fine roots into the outer walls of her nest to give it stability. Within is a lining of fine grass for palliasses strewn with loose feathers, and the whole edifice, well protected by the eave, which,



Photo. by C. Reid, Wishaw.

THE CUP OF SUN-BAKED CLAY.

Copyright

as before noted, is one course of bricks higher than the top of the picture, is as perfect a specimen of bird-architecture as the heart of man or bird need desire.

As the chicks begin to grow, and their tails develop in length, the cup of clay that is their home reminds us of the Scriptural saying, "FULL MEASURE, RUNNING OVER." You may see them in the picture, gazing seriously into the liquid air which is to be their home, waiting in full-fed contentment for the captured insects which the parent birds will bring to them in plenty. Other birds may equal the swallows in untiring exertion of the feeding of their young, but the swallows, incessantly on the wing, circling and wheeling high in the clear sky when the day is fine, skimming the meadow and grazing the surface of pond or stream when there is moisture in the air, and their prey haunt the lower strata of the atmosphere, are most strongly in evidence.

Our four little friends were all but ready to leave the nest in our second illustration, but our artist resolved to remove them tenderly and to take their photographs at his ease. Look at them complacently POSING FOR THEIR PORTRAITS on an outstretched hand. They know that man is their friend, and that, though the hand be the left, his designs are not sinister. Soon they are replaced, and in a day or two they will



Photo. C. Reid, Wishaw.

FULL MEASURE, RUNNING OVER.

Copyright.

leave the nest. The next part of their life has been described by Gilbert White, once and for all, to perfection, the reference being to a nest in a chimney:—

"The progressive method by which the young are introduced into life is very amusing. First they emerge from the shaft with difficulty enough, and often fall down into the rooms below. For a day or so they are fed upon the chimney-top, and then they are conducted to the dead, leafless bough of some tree, where, SITTING IN A ROW, they are attended with great assiduity, and may then be called perchers. In a day or two more they become flyers, but are still unable to take their own food, therefore they play about near the place where the dams are hawking for flies; and when a mouthful is collected, at a certain signal given, the dam and the nestling advance, rising towards each other and meeting at an angle, the young all the while uttering such a little quick note of gratitude and complacency that a person must have paid very little regard to the wonders of Nature that has not often remarked this feat."

Such are the generation and the education of a tribe of birds celebrated by the poets of all time, from the days of ancient Greece and Rome to our own time. Graceful in form beyond compare, they enjoy and display the very essence of the poetry of motion; harmless and even beneficial to man by virtue of the havoc they work among insects, welcome signs of the coming of



Photo. by C. Reid, Wishaw.

POSING FOR THEIR PORTRAITS.

Copyright.

the joyous season of the year, "patterns of unwearied industry and affection all the summer long," they secure the forbearance even of the boy, are beloved by all from the moment "the first swallow sweeps the freshening plain," and may certainly be described as "amusive birds." They have a thousand pretty ways, of dipping into the water as they fly, of following the rural traveller and wheeling round him for miles for the sake of the insects he disturbs; they have strange whims as to the sites of their nests; they have the courage to start on a long autumnal migration, and to buffet a marauding hawk. The only sad thing about them is their congregation, "preening their feathers and spreading their wings to the sun" before the great exodus of September. Then they collect in endless lines on the telegraph-wires and around the church towers, and the heart of man grows heavy, for this assembly means that winter is at hand, and that the blithe strangers are going away southward and taking the sun with them.

AUCEPS.



Photo. by C. Reid, Wishaw.

SITTING IN A ROW.

Copyright.

SOME NOTABLE DOGS.

THE formation of an Association of Bloodhound Breeders affords an opportunity of reproducing a photograph of the best hound Mr. E. Brough ever bred. This was BURGUNDY, a hound that at three years of age—when the risks from distemper are supposed to be of the slightest—succumbed to that dire plague. As his portrait shows, he was perfect in every particular, and his lovely head afforded a study. Mr. Brough, who is the chairman of the newly-formed association, offered Sir Charles Warren the use of his hounds some years ago, when the officials at Scotland Yard were at their wits' end to discover the perpetrators of crimes in London even yet undetected. A trial in Hyde Park proved the utility of Mr. Brough's hounds in man hunting, and had the famous Yorkshire breeder only been able to have come to an understanding with Sir Charles Warren as to compensation in case any of his pack were lost or injured, there is not the least doubt that "Jack the Ripper" would have been run down. No such arrangement could be made, and so the great chance was lost, for the hounds returned home. The same night, strange to say, the Whitechapel fiend committed another murder. There is not the least doubt that the man hunt trials proposed to be held by the English Association of Bloodhound Breeders will revive interest in the subject.

Ainsty Sylvia, the subject of our illustration, is one of



Photo. Cromack,

BURGUNDY.

Newboro', Scarborough.



Photo. by T. Fall,

QUEER STREET.*Baker Street.*

Mr. E. W. H. Blagg's most notable Dandie Dinmonts. She is close on six years old, having been whelped on May 24th, 1891. On her first appearance on the bench at Manchester, three years later, she won two first prizes and specials. Being claimed at catalogue price, she was almost immediately resold to Mr. G. A. B. Leatham, whose kennel was at that time irresistible. In the following spring, Mr. Leatham showed her at the Kennel Club Show, where she won the championship. In the ensuing autumn she added to her wins by a successful appearance at Edinburgh, and she has since won at Liverpool, Manchester, and the Crystal Palace. She is a beautiful-coated dark pepper, and, in addition to possessing the characteristic white top-knot,



Photo. J. Lowndes,

A FAMILY GROUP.*Cheadle.*

has the wonderfully straight workmanlike fore legs so difficult to get in this variety. The puppies she is nursing are by Katrine Dandie.

Mr. Harold Bryans, now secretary of the Airedale Terrier Club, has forwarded a photo of his famous Terrier, CHAMPION CHOLMONDELEY BRIAR, with the intimation that when he has scored two more wins he will be withdrawn from show life. Why two more wins it is difficult to understand, for Briar's present record, 139 first prizes, and but one second, is unprecedented in Airedale or other circles. Even this one defeat was promptly avenged, for in the same week, Briar beat his Yorkshire victor. This was, of course, under another judge, a gentleman generally admitted to be better acquainted with the breed. Cholmondeley

Briar is certainly the best Airedale of the day. His stock includes many of the big winners, but he has yet to know defeat by one of his own progeny, which is more than can be said of several of his compeers.

QUEER STREET and REGENT STREET PRINCE are litter brothers, and their parentage is by Sheffield Barry out of Hackney Gipsy, late Gipsy Knight. This remarkable brace of Bulldogs, though brothers, belong to separate owners, and that two dogs out of one litter should possess such quality is not only noteworthy, but an extremely rare occurrence. Only one other instance of the lucky breeding of all winners in one litter of Bulldogs has been known, and that was when Mr. Sam Woodiwiss had the good fortune to breed from his champion bitch Blackberry three dogs who have never yet failed to win at any show, viz., Boaz, Katerfelto, and Boomerang.

It is usually considered a sufficient reward for outlay, patience, and trouble, to have bred one celebrity in three years,



Photo. by T. Fall,

REGENT STREET PRINCE.*Baker Street.*

and some breeders have tried for twenty years, only to meet with disaster and disappointment. The competition nowadays is extremely keen, and, therefore, the chances of winning are narrowed down to such a degree that it is not easy to breed a dog of the precise quality required to "star" in the show world.

Mr. Ted Knight, breeder of Queer Street and Regent Street Prince, had little idea of the fame awaiting the puppies of his favourite bitch Gipsy. The well-merited success of this pair, who are nearly three years old, is as remarkable as it is rare, and it is very difficult to choose between them, though, of course, their merits are disputed by friendly partisans. Even in the question of colour no choice is given, for they are both of one colour, and both can boast of coats like plush of a beautiful soft shade of fawn, which falls in massive folds of wrinkle. Of the two brothers, perhaps Regent Street Prince possesses the heaviest wrinkle.

At the Kennel Club Show in October last, when they were



J. W. Webster,

CHOLMONDELEY BRIAR.*Chester.*

benched side by side (though Queer Street was not competing), the similarity of the two was very noticeable, and they gathered crowds of interested spectators round them to discuss their relative merits. In weight there is very little if any difference, both of them scaling about 50lb., but the lighter-looking of the two is Queer Street. Both are massive dogs, and combine strength with activity, and both have superb shoulders. Regent Street Prince, however, does not stand quite so well in front as Queer Street, but he has the better "roach" back, while the peculiar bulldog swing in exercise is prominent in both dogs. Queer Street fell into the ownership of the crack veterinary

surgeon, Mr. A. J. Sewell, at the Bull-dog Club Show last year, where he was sold by auction to the highest bidder, who had to give a good price, for the bidding was fast and furious.

Queer Street has won many first prizes, as well as the much-coveted Championship and the 50-Guinea Challenge Cup twice for best Bulldog in show.

Regent Street Prince, the property of Mrs. Fletcher, widow of the much-respected naturalist of Regent Street, has been equally successful, and a more celebrated brace of Bulldogs does not exist anywhere to-day than the brothers Queer Street and Regent Street Prince.

A REMARKABLE PET.

THERE will, probably, be no one to dispute the accuracy of the title selected for the heading of this article. Indeed, it would be difficult to find a much more remarkable pet than the animal depicted in our two illustrations—a tame hare. Hares have been successfully kept in captivity on certain occasions, and tamed to an extent, much as wild rabbits are tamed, being kept in hutches and allowed to run about the garden. But instances such as the present, where a hare has been made a regular house-pet, are certainly few and far between.

Probably the best-known tame hares ever kept were the world-renowned Puss and Tiney, who lived and died upwards of a hundred years ago, whose existence, and, in addition, the fact that they were made house-pets of in their fleeting days, stand chronicled in the undying verse of their master the poet, William Cowper.

Mr. Thomas Fall, the well-known photographer of Baker Street, who took the two portraits here reproduced, sends the following interesting particulars of his subject:—

"I have had a varied experience," he writes, "in my photographic life, but never previous to the occasion on which I obtained the accompanying photographs had I been summoned to immortalise a tame hare.

"In obedience to the request, I went to the house and arranged my camera in a corner of the drawing-room, concealing myself from view by sitting at a table behind a large plant. Having focussed a hassock about the size of my subject, the hare was brought into the room. I found him very nervous and shy, and ready—when opportunity offered—to bolt. His leaping powers are simply extraordinary. He had been purposely kept short of food for a little time previously, that he might be more tractable during the ordeal of having his portrait taken. After much scheming to get him to occupy a favourable position, and repeated coaxing with succulent slices of his favourite food—the banana—I was able, after he had had two scampers round the room, ending in retirement to the darkest corner he could find, from which he was brought back by his mistress, to secure several negatives of him in characteristic attitudes.

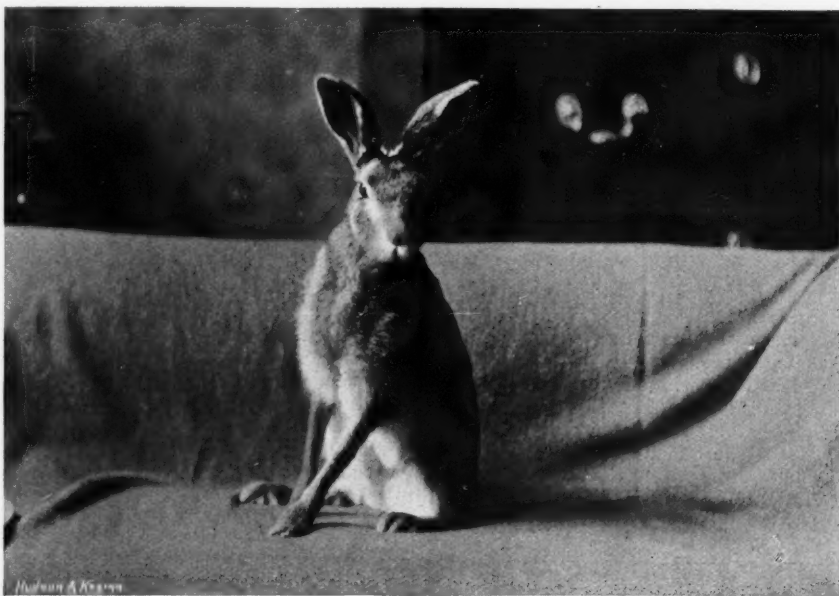


Photo. by T. Fall,

SUSPICIOUS.

Baker Street.

"In the first one of those here reproduced, he had caught sight of me, and is eyeing me suspiciously. His owner and trainer, Miss Goodacre, graciously informed me that he was caught about three years ago, when quite young. He spends most of the day in the drawing-room; but at nights he sleeps in a hutch downstairs, to which he is carried on his owner's shoulders, for though he can run upstairs, he is unable to run down, owing to his long hind and short fore legs. He is very cleanly in his habits, and, in the absence of strangers, full of play. He is extraordinarily quick at detecting the presence of a stranger, and can tell, when he comes up to the room in the morning from his hutch, if a stranger has been in the drawing-room on the previous evening, shown by his unwonted nervousness and timidity. His antics, when satisfied that only his friends are near, show that he is ready for a romp. One of his favourite games is to have a hassock rolled to him, at which time he places himself at the end of the room, and takes delight in knocking it over, and he will have the game repeated as long as his owner likes to go on. He plays at ball like a rollicking child. He has recently been taught to play on a tambourine, and that he must have a musical ear of some sort his method of playing it discloses.

"If a curtain or any new piece of furniture is introduced into the room in his absence, he will spend hours in suspiciously examining it, until finally satisfied that it bodes him no harm. A stranger may live in the house for weeks without puss becoming sociable to the new comer. But for his mistress he sits up and begs in the conventional way of the dog, and evinces gratitude for any little dainty that may be given to him.

"He treats his owner's mother in a special way. If she is sitting in her arm-chair, reading or otherwise occupied, he will sit as close as he can to her, usually on a chair at her side. If she dozes off, or is an unusually long time without taking notice of him, he is sensible enough to try to attract her attention, and he will occasionally reach over and touch her arm to remind her that he is close by.

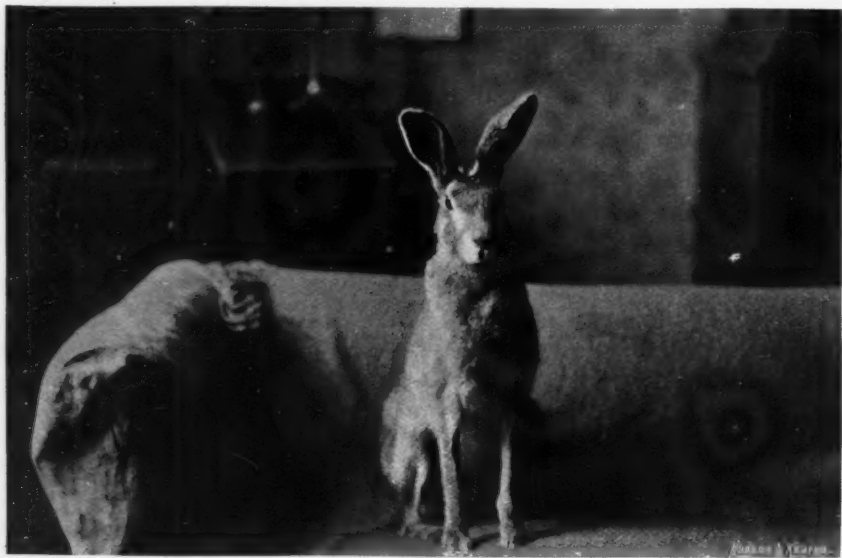


Photo. by T. Fall,

ILL AT EASE.

Baker Street.



179, New Bond Street.

LADY BUTLER AND HER CHILDREN.

Photo. by Lafayette.

COUNTRY HOMES: OXBURGH HALL.

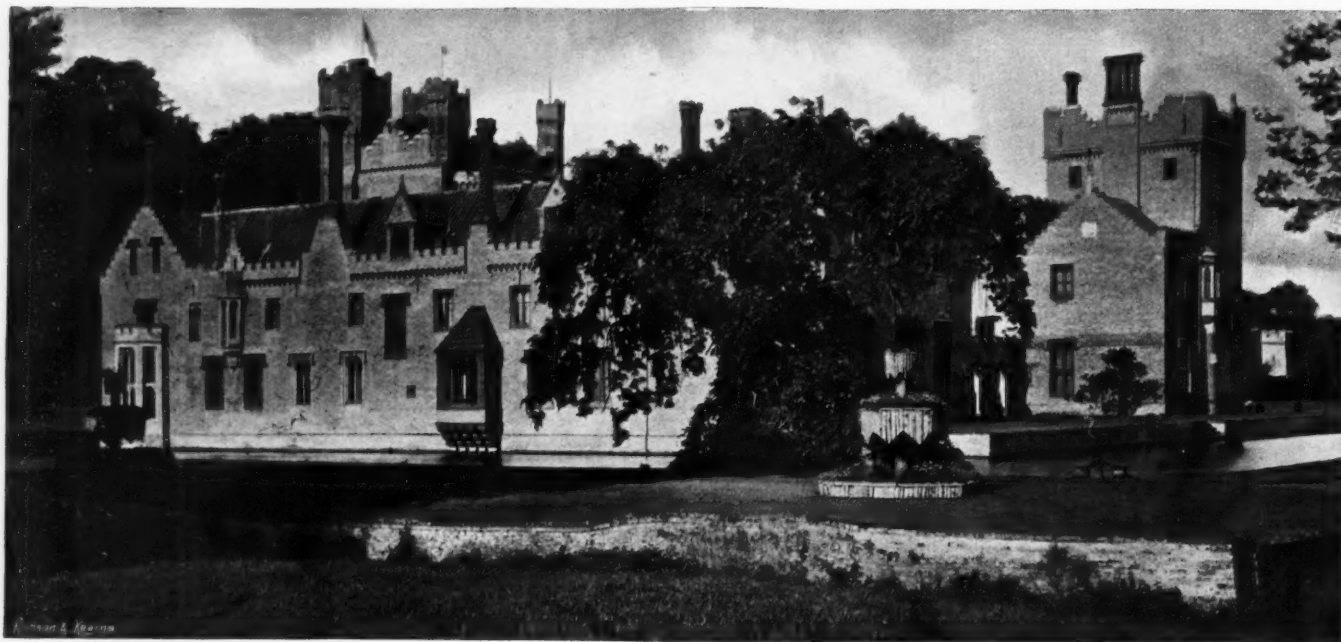


Photo. by H. N. King,

THE WEST FRONT.

Avenue Road, W.

OXBURGH HALL, near Stoke Ferry, in Norfolk, the ancient and hereditary seat of Sir Henry Paston-Bedingfeld, is one of the most splendid examples of brick architecture in this country. The grand gateway tower on the north side, which is admirably seen in the picture, is comparable to such noble examples as Hurstmonceaux, and the famous tower of Layer Marney, in Essex. Throughout the structure there is extraordinary richness of detail, and, though the house lost, in 1778, the great banqueting hall on the south side, which faced the visitor who passed beneath the archway into the quadrangle, still Oxburgh remains with a character in some respects scarcely equalled. A house had doubtless stood on the site before, but the existing building is known to have been the work of Sir Edmund Bedingfeld, and to belong to a time not much later than the reign of Edward IV. Oxburgh had come to the Bedingfelds through the marriage of Sir Edmund's grandfather with the daughter of Sir Robert Tuddenham, who ultimately became heiress of her brother Sir Thomas. A singular story has been told of the relationship of this Bedingfeld with his brother-in-law. In times of civil broil, when men took sides in the State, it sometimes happened that brothers or friends would ally themselves with rival parties, so that, whatever might be the upshot of the quarrel, one, at least, should be safe, and, as both hoped, in a position to intercede for the other, and to give him substantial equivalent for his losses. The story goes, or rather went—and no less an authority than Spelman related it—that Bedingfeld and Tuddenham were on opposite sides, by such a compact, in the Wars of the Roses, and that when Fortune favoured the Yorkists, the former secured Oxburgh for himself, and left Tuddenham to his fate. Certain it is that Sir Thomas Tuddenham was beheaded on Tower Hill, on suspicion, or proof, of having received letters from Queen Margaret, in February, 1461; but Blomefield, the Norfolk historian, has shown that when sentence was passed Bedingfeld had already been lying with his fathers for ten years in Bedingfeld Churchyard, in Suffolk.

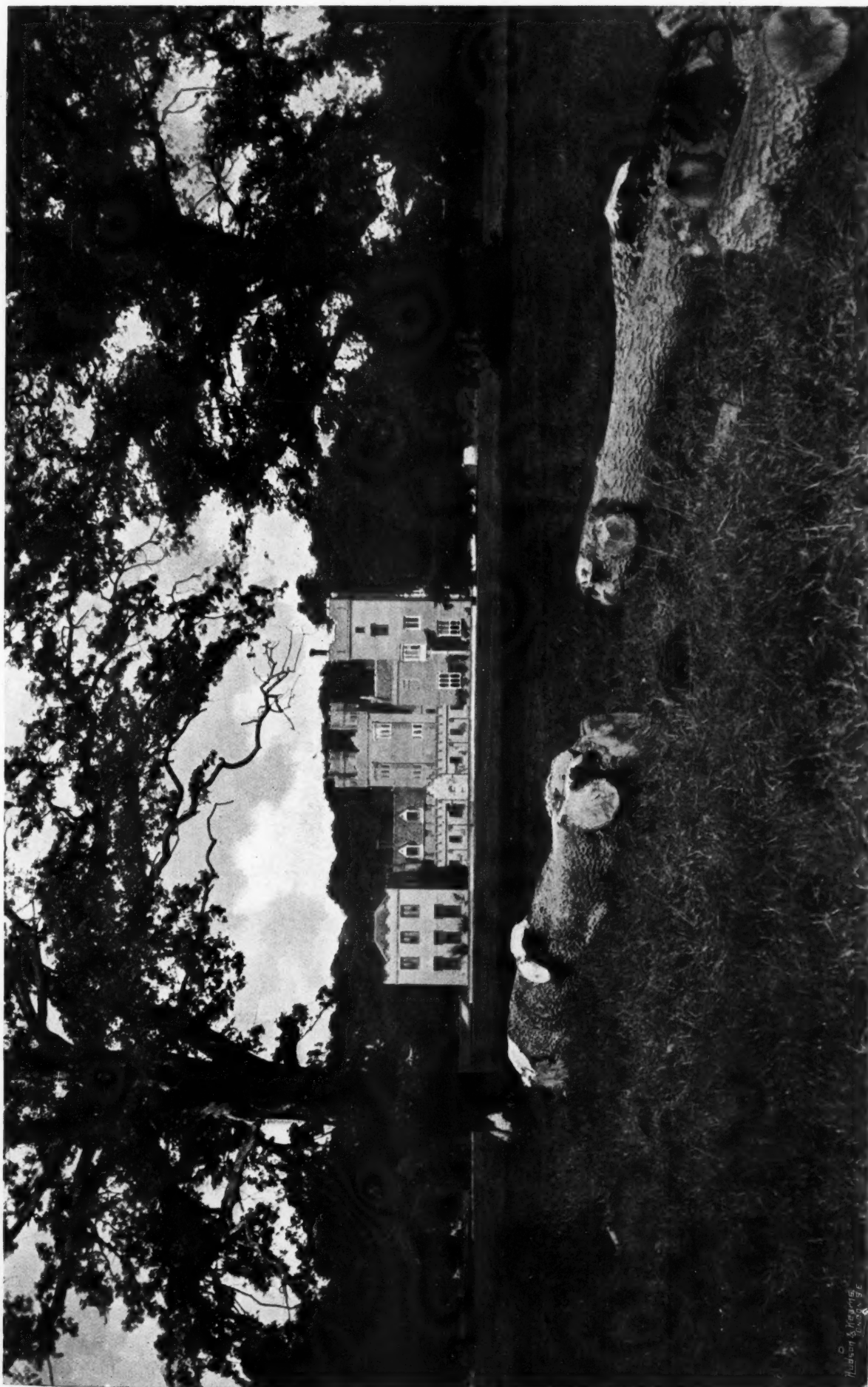
It was his grandson, Sir Edmund Bedingfeld, who was made a Knight of the Bath at the coronation of Richard III., that built Oxburgh. About the year 1482 he received a licence to raise his manor house after the fashion of a castle; that is, to “embattle, crenel, and machicolate” it—and, if ever he had done anything of the kind before, he was pardoned for it—and he was to hold a market and a Court of Pye Powder, too. How he set to work the illustrations show. The outermost defence was the moat, fed with fresh water from a neighbouring stream, which still remains, more than fifty feet broad, and is capable of being filled to a depth of ten feet. It was spanned in his time by a drawbridge, which is now replaced by one of brick and stone, whose three arches bring the visitor to the foot of the great gate-tower. The magnificent character of the brickwork is at once evident, for the hands must have been those of highly-skilled craftsmen which worked the perpendicular panelling of the flanking towers, the quoins, dressings, and window labels, all in moulded brick. When Oxburgh was built the day of strongly fortified houses was



Photo. H. N. King,

THE GATE-TOWER.

Avenue Road, W.



Avenue Road, W.

COUNTRY HOMES: OXBURGH HALL.

Photo. by H. N. King,

past, and the crenellations and "corbie"-stepped embattlements of the Norfolk house were clearly more domestic and decorative than military. It is thus, like Cowdray, in Sussex, and many more, the mark of a new era, which may be seen, architecturally foreshadowed in an earlier stage, at Hurstmonceux.

Within the quadrangle, the gate-tower is equally good, for, though the angle turrets do not rise from the ground, and are merely airily perched at the corners of the tower, there stand, on the face of the brickwork, and on each side of the archway, two beautiful half-turrets, with triple stages of finely-worked windows. On the north side, with the entrance tower, are the porter's lodge, with a curious vaulted brick roof, and the dining-room, while the library and saloon are on the west, and the domestic offices on the east. The banqueting hall, as has been said, has gone from the south side—Blomefield says it had an oak roof comparable with that at Westminster Hall—but a cloister of brick completes the quadrangle. The lovely architectural details of the north and west fronts are admirably seen in the pictures: the character of the embattlements, with the stepped gables, the mullioned windows, with richly-worked heads, the beauty and variety of the oriels, some daintily projecting from the upper walls, one with splendid features overhanging the moat, the charm of bay windows, the delicate decoration of the chimneys—like those at Hampton Court and in many other Tudor houses—all these are remarkably beautiful examples of the time.

In one turret of the gateway tower is an unusual brick staircase. Henry VII., when he visited Sir Edmund Bedingfeld—probably in 1487, when he made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham—probably ascended the winding way, for the room over the gateway, known as the King's Room, is asserted by tradition to have been that in which he slept. The bed and curious tapestry in the room are heirlooms, and the coverlet and curtains are very remarkable, having been worked, apparently at Sheffield Castle, partly by Mary Queen of Scots. The former is covered with strange beasts, each with its name, as thus—"A Leparde," "A Buke," "A Civett Catte," and "A Swalloe." Mary was never at Oxburgh, but her

cousin Elizabeth visited Sir Henry Bedingfeld there during a "progress" in Norfolk, and is believed to have been lodged in the chamber over the king's. She appears to have called him jestingly her "gaoler," for, in earlier times, when he had stood well in the favour of Queen Mary—whose Vice-Chamberlain he was—he had been, for a while, her custodian. There seems to be no warrant for the assertion that he treated her cruelly, though the appointed discipline, as the manner of the age was, may well have been severe.

Oxburgh possesses a characteristic memorial of the age, in a place to which hunted men might flee—a "priest's hiding-hole"—being a chamber not more than five feet square in one of the turrets. There is a small arched closet, entered through a trap concealed in the floor, and the door, having a wooden framework enclosing bricks, is so contrived that it moves on a revolving central axis on being pressed on one side. The Sir Henry Bedingfeld of Commonwealth days committed "treason against the Parliament and people of England," and his house was seized; but, when the Restoration came, and, in the phrase of the day, "the sun shone on the other side of the hedge," the representative of the Bedingfelds regained it, and it has ever since remained with that ancient East Anglian family.

In a county that boasts houses as famous as Holkham, Blickling, and Raynham, as interesting as Heydon, Wallington, Easthall, Felbrigg, and Hunstanton, Oxburgh has merits and distinctions all its own. In troublous Stuart times it would have answered to the description of versatile Master Stephen Ganlesse as "an ancient hall with an old knightly Pantaloone for its lord, an all-beruffed Dame Barbara for the lady gay, a Jesuit, in a butler's habit, to say grace, an old tale of Edgehill and Worster fights to relish a cold venison pasty, a flask of claret mantled with cobwebs, and a bed for you in the priest's hiding-hole." To-day, with its old-world chambers, its curious and interesting portraits of youthful Henry VII., of Mary Stuart, William de la Pole, Sir Thomas Gresham, the Earl and Countess of Arundel, Secretary Cromwell and others, and its collection of splendid furniture and arms, it stands, amid its beautiful woods and meadows, a noble exemplar of the country homes of former days.

JOHN LEYLAND.

CYCLING.



Photo. by Thomas,

IBBESLEY BRIDGE.

Cleapside.

NORTH WALES is easy and inexpensive of approach—a consideration to the cyclist who travels by rail to the actual scene of his holiday-making.

Chester is the most suitable entrance-gate from the north country; Shrewsbury from the south. After a day spent among the unique attractions of the walled city on the Dee, the cyclist may take either of two routes into Wales; the first to Llangollen, the second to Rhyl. From Shrewsbury there are again alternative routes—one through Oswestry, passing Chirk Castle, to Llangollen; the other, *via* Newtown, to Machynlleth, the parting of the ways for Aberystwith and Barmouth.

Starting at Llangollen, with its many attractions, from the bridge, one of the "seven wonders of Wales," and the Dee, its ever beautiful river, to Valle Crucis Abbey, two miles away, it is a good plan to follow the Bala road. There is a long wooded ascent, commencing at Berwyn, the home of Sir Theodore Martin, but, barring this, it is excellent going. The scenery loses much of its interest half-way to Corwen, whose redeeming features are the church and Owen Glyndwr's Rock, more memorable perhaps in these days for the cairn commemorating the Prince of Wales's marriage than for its having been the view point of the Welsh Prince before the battle of Shrewsbury.

The road thence on the right bank of the Dee is the more interesting of the two leading to Bala (twenty-two miles), an uninviting town to the tourist.

For half the lake's length the road runs alongside, and is good. At its foot, where the Dolgelly road proper commences, the surface becomes bad, and this continues during the ascent of the heathery uplands between the valleys of

the Dee and the Wnion. At Drws-y-Nant the road improves, and the ride thence to Dolgelly (seventeen and a-half miles from Bala) is, perhaps, one of the finest in North Wales.

The Barmouth road is pleasantly hilly, and runs along one of the most famed sheets of water in the United Kingdom—the Mawddach Estuary. It should be ridden from Barmouth to Dolgelly by preference—the views are incomparably finer. Barmouth to Harlech—a way which in olden days must have seen much marching of fierce Welsh warriors—is a level run with sea views, and one exquisite peep into the mountains at Llanbedr Bridge.

Harlech Castle (ten and a-half miles from Barmouth) is fortunate in its site; from its grey walls one sees the sand dunes deep below, the Llyn Promontory across the blue sea, the Traeth Bach Estuary, and the giant peaks of Snowdonia. And the ride from Harlech to, say, Beddgelert (twenty-two miles) is one which for variety and interest, attended by good roads, is hard to beat. The road to Beddgelert passes through Tan-y-Bwlch (a convenient place for testing the merits of the narrow gauge railway), the last eight miles being remarkable not only for the beauty of the way, but for the increasing grandeur of the views. At Penrhyn (bad hill) the wheelman could have gone straight on to Criccieth and Pwllheli.

Beddgelert has only three approaches: the first by the way we have come, through the pass of Aberglaslyn; the second, from Carnarvon by Llyn Cwellyn and Y-Gader (long descent into Beddgelert); and the third from Pen-y-Gwryd by the Gwynant Valley. The two last are striking contrasts: the first route is as wild as could well be; the second, luxuriantly wooded, under the slopes of the Snowdon range. Indeed, no more beautiful ride could well be taken than that along the lake of Gwynant up to the inn so closely connected with Charles Kingsley's fame.

From Llanberis to Carnarvon (eight miles), with the exception of the run along Llyn Padarn, is distinctly uninteresting. At the royal city it is of course the duty of every loyal cyclist to see the castle, and if he has done this he will probably feel more free to give vent to his outraged feelings as he rides along to the Menai Bridge, prevented by high walls from catching more than an occasional glimpse of the Straits. The lane leading to the Britannia Tubular Bridge should be noted, and the cyclist is allowed to cross the Suspension Bridge on his machine. The only decent cycling road in Anglesea is that to Holyhead; the one possessing the greatest interest leads to Beaumaris. There are few who have seen the Nant Francon Pass who have not felt it to be one of the finest pieces of scenery in North Wales; and, from the cyclist's point of view, it is much better going than the Pass of Llanberis, on the other side of the Glyders. The road from Bangor leads past Penrhyn Castle, through Bethesda, and then climbs up to Llyn Idwal, above whose dark troubled waters lies the "Devil's Kitchen." The run down to Capel Curig is good—at the corner there is a fine view of Snowdon—and a long descent to Bettws-y-Coed (twenty miles from Bangor) follows.

Of course every cyclist staying at Llandudno runs out to Conway and along the coast to Aber and Bangor. It is a beautiful ride, full of interest to the artist, the archaeologist, and the botanist; only, "mark the course of the wind before you start." There is no more trying fight than that involved in working against a head wind on this particular route. There is a stiff rise round Penmaenbach and a dangerous hill into Llanfairfechan.

From Llandudno to Colwyn Bay forms an interesting ride, especially in the immediate district of the embattled church of Llandrillo Rhos. Proceeding to Abergel the surface is good, with a long ascent at Old Colwyn, but between Abergel and Rhyl (fourteen miles from Llandudno) it is in parts execrable.

To sum up: North Wales must ever be a favourite resort of the cyclist. There is the Mawddach Estuary, a sheet of water to which he who has cycled alongside by the wooded way from Barmouth, looking upon the mountains, each so distinctive, and yet together forming so complete and exquisite a picture, will find difficulty in meting out sufficiency of praise; there is the north coast road, which accompanies its lavish gifts of pure sea air and many beauteous seascapes with a close proximity to mountain heights and mountain passes—now

luxuriantly wooded, now terrible in wildness; there are the Llanberis and Nant Francon Passes, which to the cyclist, especially if he be also a mountaineer, artist, or scientist, are of the greatest of the works of Nature in these islands of ours; and there are the bye-ways about the purple mountains, not marked on cycling maps, where lie, in all probability, the loveliest bits of all.

L. RIVERS VINE.



"AND aren't there links at Orotava, in Teneriffe, too, Mr. Flegg?" asked Bob.

"There is a green, but it is five miles or so from the town—at Las Palmas it is but a quarter of a mile, and you can ride up on a donkey. The Orotava green has actually some grass; but it was rough, strangely rough, when I was there. Few cared, especially in that climate, to go five miles from home for their golf."

"Wouldn't it be better if the Las Palmas people played the ball as it lay, under the ordinary rules?" I asked.

"That is a question, my dear sir," the professor answered, with a smile, "that suggests a larger one. A good deal depends on the point of view from which we are pleased to regard the game of golf as a whole. If we play the game for pleasure then I must admit that the strange practices of Las Palmas make for one's pleasure in the golf as it is there to be played. But on the other hand I know very well"—this with a glance in the colonel's direction—"that such a point of view is quite inadmissible in the eyes of our good friend Colonel Burscough."

"You'll be saying you play golf for exercise next, as if golf was bicycling!" the colonel muttered in response, with a vague sense that he was being "drawn."

Of the discussion of the rival merits of courses there is no end, and our comparisons and estimates of the qualities of Nairn were manifold. The colonel had a special grudge against the small size of the putting greens, though even he could not deny their superlative fineness when you had persuaded your ball to stop on them. He maintained with strenuousness that the first four holes, called the Loop (for the fourth green is immediately in front of the club house and close to the first tee), were the best on the course. The longer holes, on the main body of the links, and especially that farthest out one, towards the fisherman's hut, where the lies leave something to be desired, appeared in his eyes to be all that was most abominable. Robert, on the other hand, found great fault with the lengths of each of the holes of the Loop, excepting the third, which a long cleek shot will reach. The rest, he declared, were all of the levelling, paralysing distance—just a drive and an iron shot apiece. The colonel's measure of drives and iron shots was not the same, but shorter by many yards, than that of his hopeful nephew, and the result was that any agreement between them was, in the nature of the case, out of the question. You cannot expect two folk to arrive at the same measurements if the yard measure of one is a foot longer than the other's. It can scarcely be said that uncle and nephew even "agreed" to differ on this point—"disagreed"—to differ would indicate their relations more accurately; but the disagreement was not allowed to interfere with the harmony of our evenings.

But, their differences of opinion apart, this course of Nairn is an excellent one of eighteen holes, meandering out, after the

Loop, along the southern shore of the Moray Firth, towards Inverness, with the sea rippling up alongside of you all the way. The putting greens are very excellent. Through the green, the lies are fair, but though the soil is sandy, the grass has a tendency to grow too thick, and strong, so that mowing is a necessity in the summer and autumn months. There are many short holes, but also two exceedingly long ones, and seventy-four, by Joseph Dalgleish, is the lowest score returned on it. The hazards are whins and sand-bunkers, with occasional wire fences—a species of golfing obstacle that appealed to all the most volcanic elements of the colonel's temper. Often in the long evenings—there was but time to snatch two rounds, with a brief interval for luncheon, between the late rising of the sun at half-past eight, and its early and ruddy setting at half-past three—we would discuss projects for a visit to Dornoch, said to be a charming links, but most inaccessible, on the opposite shore of the Firth. To arrive there, by any means, before latish in the afternoon, seemed impossible from Nairn, and report spoke of it as a strange place where all was golf and inactivity during the morning hours, all the year round, but the afternoon brought the London mail and visitors, and Dornoch suddenly sprang awake. But of all this we spoke only from hearsay; but we made personal trial of the links at Lossiemouth, and found them good, though here and there the ball would lie on stony ground.

"And why the everything," exclaimed the colonel, ruefully feeling the dented edge of his iron on the evening of our Lossiemouth jaunt, "should they not clear the stones out of the bunkers, and hack them out of the turf. Put a dozen old women on the links for a week, and there wouldn't be a stone left on them."

"If seven maids, with seven mops,
Should sweep for half a year,
There do you think, the walrus said——"

"No, I do not," said the colonel, fiercely interrupting his nephew. "I do not say 'sweep,' I said pick—pick up the stones, hack them out of the turf, and cast them away."

"Pardon me, my dear sir," said Mr. Flegg, with his accustomed courtesy, "will you forgive me if I ask you to suspend your judgment on this matter a moment, while I cite to you the case of the course at Sherringham—Sherringham, in Norfolk, you know, my dear sir?"

"Of course, Flegg, of course," said the colonel, testily—"close to Cromer. Everyone knows Sherringham."

"A pretty little place," observed the professor, blandly. "The new holes, however, somewhat stony. The experiment has been tried there of picking up the stones—by old women, I believe, exactly as you would suggest—but the result has merely been that other stones worked up again from below, and the second crop soon was as thick as the first."

"Then what the deuce is one to do, Flegg, when one gets stones under the turf?"

"Encourage the turf to grow, my dear sir, more thickly and more solidly over them. In this way, I am assured, it is possible to form so thick a mat over the stones, that they are no longer able to make their way to the surface."

"Um," said the colonel, unconvinced. "I'd be inclined to back the old women."

Another links which we visited, without trouble, from Nairn, was a little nine-hole course at Fortrose, on the Black Isle. We drove to Fort Augustus, and crossed the Firth, there a mile or so in width, by the ferry, and on landing were only about a mile from the course. The golf was of moderate quality, and the professor allowed his attention to be distracted by rumours of a curious old church, which he visited, and recounted to us all its features in the evening, until a snore from Colonel Burscough recalled him to the fact that few topics of conversation were of importance or interest in comparison with golf.

"It is quite obvious, my dear sir," the professor was saying, "from the position of what I take to be the chapter house, that the original edifice has been cut short—"

"Yes," said the colonel, groaning uneasily as he snored himself awake, "and I have made up my mind to lighten it, too."

Master Bob was discourteous enough to laugh somewhat loudly.

"What is it?" his uncle asked. "What's the matter with the boy?"

"The church—are you going to lighten, uncle?"

"The church—oh, yes, the church, I remember. What nonsense you are talking, Flegg. I wasn't talking about the church—I was talking about my driver."

"Oh! your driver—yes, quite so," the professor answered.

"You say that you intend to lighten it. Yes?"

(To be continued.)

"AN EIGHTEEN HANDS HORSE."

ON the occasion of the visit of our artist to Kingsclere last autumn, permission having been kindly granted by His Grace the Duke of Westminster and other patrons of the stable for the portraits of their horses to appear in RACING ILLUSTRATED, some talk arose at the luncheon table at Park House about the pictures that our artist had secured during that morning. An enquiry by one of the company present

as to whether he had taken a picture of "the eighteen hands horse," met with a reply in the negative, so he was informed that as his series of portraits would be altogether incomplete without a picture of this gigantic animal, he must make arrangements to take the portrait immediately after luncheon. Further enquiry on his part as to the name of the animal of these huge proportions could draw no more definite information than that "the eighteen hands horse" would be ready for him to photograph as soon as he was ready to take it. And so it was, on the lawn, whither the company made their way after luncheon.

It is a most remarkable little animal, and though it cannot lay claim to be quite the smallest pony in the world, there are not many persons who have ever seen a smaller one. The little owner holding the reins is, or was at the time that the photograph was taken, just three years of age, and the fact that she is standing rather farther back in the picture than the pony, goes to show what a veritable pigmy the little quadruped is. Mr. John Porter, in kindly furnishing our artist with the particulars of "the eighteen hands horse" says: "The pony was given to my little granddaughter, Violet Williams, by Mrs. Hope Johnstone. It stands 34 in. high—eight and a-half hands—and is, I think, a pure Shetland."



Photo, by W. A. Rouch.

A PURE SHETLAND.

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THE SOUTHDOWN HUNT STEEPLECHASES.

THE annual Southdown Hunt Steeplechases were held this year over the usual course at Ringmer, under National Hunt Rules. The weather was delightfully fine, and induced a very large number of people to come out for the races; indeed, it is a long time since there has been such a big crowd on the course. The traffic by road from Brighton and Lewes was exceptionally heavy, and the carriage enclosures crowded. The course, which was the same as usual, was all sound grass land, with fair natural fences on the farm of Mr. Page, of Ringmer.

The brilliant promise of



Photo, by W. A. Rouch.

A STRAGGLING START.

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the morning was maintained throughout the day, it being almost impossible to wish for more perfect weather for a race meeting. The crowd was very dense in the vicinity of the finishing point, which was opposite the grand stand, and this was quite crammed with spectators, while the course the whole way round was quite alive with humanity. The going was excellent, and while the six events on the card furnished capital sport, it is very satisfactory to note that there were no accidents. True, there were one or two spills, but they were of a harmless character, neither horse or jockey being a bit the worse.

For the Patcham Steeplechase, the first race of the day, our artist secured the picture, entitled *A STRAGGLING START*, at the moment of flag-fall. It is not exactly the sort of send-off that would pass muster at Kempton or Sandown, but if rumour speaks truly it is a not uncommon thing for the field to get away in similar order at small hunt meetings, especially where equally as keen a rider as figures on the leading horse in our illustration is up.

The Patcham Steeplechase brought a field of seven horses to the post. Chance It showed the way until Sting took up the running, and this order was maintained to the close of the first round. Half-way round the second time Chance It took the lead, and ultimately won comfortably by three lengths. There was a fine race for the Ringmer Open Plate. The favourite, Oceanic, refused the water jump the first time round and gave up, but the other three

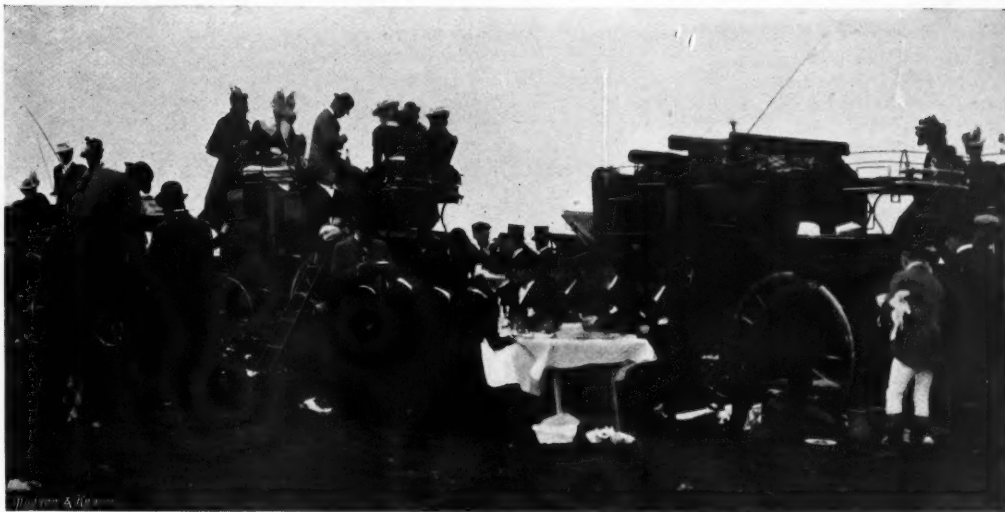


Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

BEHIND THE DRAGS.

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THE OPEN DITCH.

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passed the grand stand in close company, Solent Belle making the running to the straight. A close finish between Solent Belle and Michaelmas ended in favour of the last-named, who won by a short head.

The next event, the Laughton Selling Plate, was a runaway affair for the favourite, *Rendezvous II.*, who led all the way, and won by twelve lengths.

A good deal of interest was attached to the Southdown Hunt Cup, for which four horses came to the post. Three out of the four were about equally fancied, and a good race was anticipated. In the result Stowe led for some distance, but half-way round the last time Glamour came through, and going right away, won by ten lengths.

In the Littledene Fox-Hunters' Plate, Sally made the running, in a field of six, with Coastguard and Freedom close up. This was the order when the horses passed the stand for the last round, the others being several lengths behind. Sally then established a strong lead, and looked all over a winner on entering the straight, but Coral then drew up and, overhauling her, got home by a head.

The last race was the Sussex Plate, which was reduced to a match between Waitaki and Colleen. Colleen fell early in the race, and Waitaki finished alone.



Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

THE HURDLE.

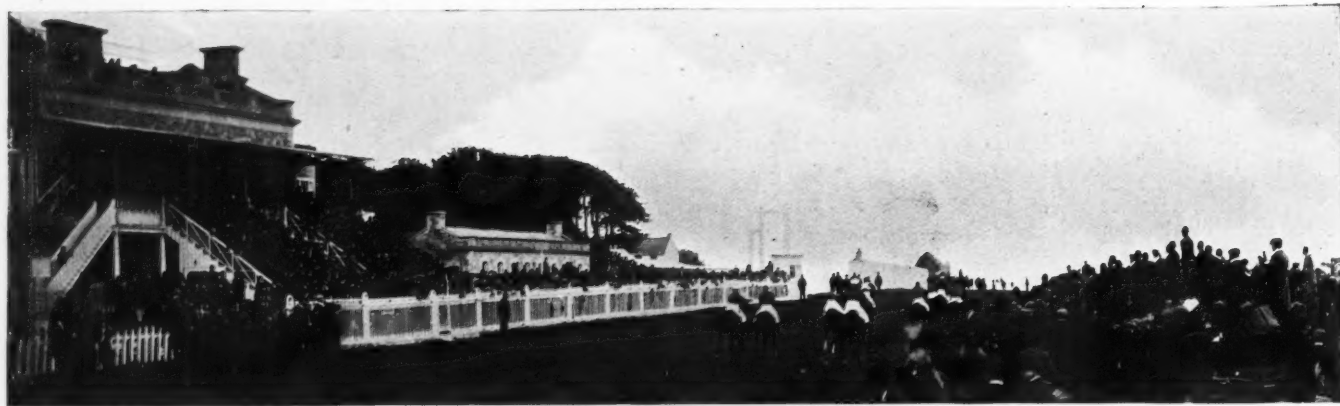
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THE FIRST FENCE.

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THE RULES OF THE GAME.

THE BERRYSIDE POINT-TO-POINT.

IN the early part of the month of April, some two years ago, a strong under-current of excitement and interest was pervading county Society in the neighbourhood of Berringham. Point-to-point racing was then fast becoming fashionable, and the Berryside Point-to-Point Steeplechases were to be held on the Saturday of the week after Easter.

All sporting Berringham—and being the hunting centre of the country Berringham is a very sporting place—was occupied in discussing the prospects of the various horses and their riders—especially the riders—for the events in question.

For some little time past things had not been proceeding in an altogether amicable way among the supporters of the Berryside Hunt. The Hunt was split up into two parties, who were disputing, and bitterly, about a proposed reduction in the number of hunting days, from five days a fortnight to two meets a week. Not a point of so very much importance, one would imagine, or one upon which different views need be irreconcilable, but yet one in the present instance sufficient to cause a lot of bad feeling, and to set all the followers of the pack by the ears.

One section—plutocratic and recently settled in the district—were using the proposed reduction of hunting days as a lever to oust the Master from the position that he had occupied for some dozen years, and during which time he had fulfilled the duties of his office to the complete satisfaction of all the old supporters of the Hunt. The nominee of this section for the Mastership was a certain Josiah Goldshair, a man of many money bags, a millionaire of rapidly and recently accumulated wealth. As very often happens in similar cases, Mr. Goldshair had contrived during the twelve months that had elapsed since he purchased Berringham Manor—park and pictures, farms and furniture, as a going concern for a lump sum down from the last representative of the old but impoverished county family that had possessed it for generations—to make himself extremely unpopular in county Society.

Mr. Goldshair was understood to be prepared to hunt the country at his own expense, and, moreover, was known to be thirsting to occupy the proud position of M.F.H. The subscription to the Hunt was not particularly good, for the country was not a wealthy one. Nevertheless, the hunt had always been very well done, and Mr. Woodford Ludlow, the Master, had, at considerable personal expense, shown excellent sport for many years past. But about half-way through the season then drawing to a close, Mr. Ludlow had intimated that, though he was prepared to continue to hunt the country five days per fortnight, if the original subscription was properly maintained, the limit that he was himself disposed to expend annually on the Hunt had been reached, and as the subscription had considerably fallen off of late, he was only prepared to hunt the country two days a week in future. The old residents maintained that the new comers should support the Hunt with sufficient subscriptions to keep up the five days a fortnight. The plutocratic party did not object to subscribe, but if they did so, wanted to appoint their Master.

That, briefly, was the state of affairs in the inner circles of the Berryside Hunt when the annual point-to-point steeplechases came on for decision.

Mr. Josiah Goldshair's personal appearance was, from the sporting point of view, not impressive. Although he could not claim to look the part of the "ossiest gentleman afoot," as the "footiest gentleman on an 'oss" he would have run anyone hard. He paid immense prices for his horses, and had some really good hunters in his stable, but he gave them little or no opportunity to display their ability to hounds in his hands, for he was anything but a straight goer across country, and it was the fact that he was so essentially a shirker in the hunting-field which so particularly enraged the hard riding members of the Hunt at his presumption in aspiring to the position of Master.

Naturally Mr. Goldshair had a sycophantic swarm of

followers—friends they termed themselves. Whether or not they were what they professed to be, it is pretty certain that the primary object of their assiduous attendance on "Old Joss," as many of them termed him, was not so much the pleasure of his society as a keen desire to "get a bit" for themselves. On the day of the point-to-point this contingent turned up in strong force to do themselves well at luncheon, provided in a large marquee which their host had established in a little enclosure marked off for himself and his friends.

As a matter of fact the millionaire was a big feature in the day's proceedings. It had been found that the most desirable site for the finish of the races was in a meadow on the Manor Estate, and as Mr. Goldshair, of course—in view of his aspirations to succeed to Mr. Ludlow's position should opportunity arise—readily gave permission when asked for the use of his land, he was quite the great man of the day.

Under the circumstances, the committee could not, of course, do less than include his name in the list of stewards. What with this official recognition, and the fact that the races were held over his property, there was no holding him. It so happened that Mr. Ludlow's horse fell with him when out with hounds ten days before the point-to-point took place, and a broken leg kept the Master at home on the day that the steeplechases were run.

Mr. Goldshair had made up his mind that everything in connection with the arrangements for the day should be very complete. A week previously he had attended the West Ploughshire Hunt Steeplechases, which had been a very one-horse affair, and now that his chance had come he was just going to show the county how things ought to be done. The West Ploughshire had had one little ramshackle stand; he meant to have two good ones. It was very stupid that for some silly reason the secretary had only arranged three races for Berryside when the West Ploughshire had run six, but that could not be helped now. He kept all his plans as a surprise for the other stewards, because he knew they had some stupid idea about not aiming at outdoing the West Ploughshire, but he caused a couple of stands to be erected, close to the winning-post, of which he reserved one for his friends and acquaintances. The other he threw open to the public; but, that it might be select and comfortable, and at the same time in the hope of doing a very cute stroke of business towards attaining local popularity, he fixed a charge of half-a-crown a head for entrance to the enclosure, and stated on the ticket of admission that the whole of the proceeds would be devoted to the Hunt Servants' Benefit Society. In addition to this, he personally superintended the laying out of the "run-in," which he caused to be carefully marked out with flags all the way up the straight, as also were the three last jumps of the course; all, in fact, which were on his property.

It was useless for the secretary and the other stewards, when they arrived, to remonstrate with him for the unauthorised steps he had taken. He would listen to nothing. He had done it for the public benefit, he said, and everyone present was delighted with his arrangements—in fact everybody said the meeting had never been so well arranged before. If this, that, and the other were contrary to custom, they were all there to enjoy themselves, and what did it matter? Anyhow, if the races were to be held over his land, this was how he intended to have things done, so if the other stewards did not like it, they need not hold the races at all. That, as far as he was concerned, was the long and short of the matter.

In the end, Old Joss, as his friends termed him, carried the day, and the races took place. Further, to the delight of the Goldshair contingent, but greatly to the disgust of the opposite party—principally owing to the secession at the last moment on the part of an owner who was going to run two likely horses—the Berringham Manor stable furnished the winners of both the Hunt Point-to-Point, as the light-weight race was called, and

the Welter Cup. To crown all, Joss himself, at the end of the day, after the decision of the Farmers' Race, rode a match over the last two miles of the course, at catch-weights, with one of his friends as a wind-up to the day's proceedings. Marvellous to relate, he came safely out of the ordeal, and what is more, his exhibition of incompetent horsemanship all up the straight failed to prevent his vastly superior mount from beating his opponent by a short half-length.

The part played by Mr. Goldshair on the day in question naturally did not tend to increase his popularity with the old subscribers to the Hunt. A month or two later a meeting was

held, and matters came to a climax, when he was given clearly to understand, though not perhaps in so many words, that the Berryside would not have him for a Master—nor for the matter of that in any other capacity—at any price. Which intimation, curious to relate, considerably astonished him. So after a further residence of some six months in the district, finding he could, as he put it, "make no 'edway," Mr. Goldshair thought it best to clear out at a sacrifice, and sold the Manor, lock, stock, and barrel, for considerably less than he gave for it, and taking his departure for more congenial climes, shook off the dust of Berringham from his boots for ever and a day.

HEXHAM STEEPLECHASES.

GOOD horses, good fields, good company, good sport, a capital course, and a first-rate place for watching the racing! What more could the most ardent lover of steeplechasing desire? These and other advantages were provided by the Hexham executive, and proud men must Mr. Henderson, the hon. secretary, and his colleagues have been to view the happy results which followed their efforts to make the Hexham Steeplechase Meeting a success.

Hexham racecourse is on the side of a high hill which overlooks the town—"It's ten mile to the course, and a mile and a-half back," said a burly native at the railway station—and the view from the top is superb; the whole county of Northumberland seems to be spread out before one, and in the dim distance the Cheviots, encircled by a purple haze which would delight an artist, can be made out.

But it was not to admire the view that the crowd climbed the steep heights of Yarridge Downs. They had come to attend one of the best of the cross-country meetings held in the North of England; and that the programme and proceedings of the Anti-Gambling League meet with little sympathy among the hardy men of the North, was fairly evidenced by the way in which they trooped out in their thousands to "t raaces."

Situated between Newcastle and Carlisle, Hexham, the ancient town of St. Wilfrid, is one of the most picturesque towns to be found in the North of England. Steeplechases have been held here from time immemorial; but, to the regret of many good sportsmen, the fixture was allowed to die out altogether about twenty years ago. Then one of the Tyne-dale lovers of sport, Mr. C. W. C. Henderson, of The Riding, Hexham, came to the rescue. He threw himself heart and soul into the matter, spared neither time, money, nor trouble on the object he had in view, with the result that now Hexham is one of the best steeplechase meetings held in "the North countree."

The "canny mon" from Newcastle, and, indeed, throughout the county, is a sportsman of the keenest possible character, and that he most thoroughly appreciates the treat provided for him by the Hexham executive, is evidenced by the invariably large attendance at the meeting.

The course is a capital one for going, the admirable state both of takes-off and landings being conclusively shown by the very small number of falls—one of its principal attractions to the spectator being that, as it is situated on the side of a hill, the whole of the course, from end to end, can be seen from the enclosure. And what a hill it is to ascend from the railway station! It is of a steepness to which South countrymen are unaccustomed—"just like the



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IN THE PADDOCK.

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THE HEXHAM HURDLE HANDICAP.

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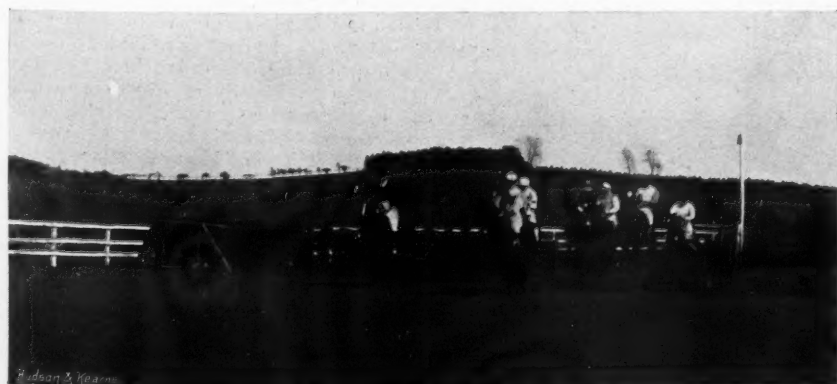


Photo. by C. Hussey.

AN EASY RUN THROUGH.

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side of a house." Indeed, it is only just lately that it has been possible to get any conveyance up this steep ascent. This perhaps explains the peculiar ideas of distance alluded to above.

The arrangements of the course for the public, owners, trainers, and jockeys, are all the most exacting critic can require. The paddock and enclosures leave nothing to be desired, and, most important to racing men, there is a wire laid on from the town to the course. These efforts—or perhaps, more correctly speaking, this "labour of love"—on the part of Mr. Henderson, have raised the Hexham Steeplechase Meeting to the foremost rank of country meetings. He has enlisted the interest of all classes of sportsmen, and so successfully, that no less than one hundred horses competed at the meeting during the two days on which racing took place.

The colours of that sterling good sportsman of the North, Mr. R. C. Vyner, were seen at Hexham this year for the first time. Under auspicious circumstances, too, it is pleasing to note, for Mr. Vyner sent three horses to the meeting, and won three races. The *élite* of the county supported the meeting, and perhaps one thing only was wanting to complete the satisfaction and pleasure of the large number of those attending the meeting, and that was to see one of the popular hon. secretary's horses carry off one of the principal prizes.

The first day's sport comprised six events, the first item of which was the Yarridge Steeplechase, for which Loddon was made favourite. From the start Lamb's Tail went away in front of Stelling, with Loddon in close attendance. So they ran for the greater part of the journey, Lamb's Tail practically leading all the way, and won by a length and a-half from Stelling, with Countess Beatrice third.

For the Haydon Flat Race Plate a field of six faced the starter, but the violet and white belt was in the van all the



Photo. C. Hussey.

SAND CHAT WINS.

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Photo. by C. Hussey.

THE DEVIL'S WATER.

way, and, holding the issue safe, Mr. Vyner's Sand Chat won as he liked by half-a-dozen lengths from Lorry and Gleniffer.

There was a turn-up in the next race, for the little fancied Coercion won the West Dipton Handicap, Master Joe being second, and the favourite, Tommy, finishing third.

The race of the day, the Hexham Handicap Hurdle Plate, fell to another of Mr. Vyner's horses, St. Mathurin, who, after Sand Chat's success, was made a strong favourite. Bruff and Canning ran second and third, but St. Mathurin won very easily. Our illustration shows the field for this race passing the stand the first time round.

Miss Morrison, The Toy, and Traynor were the placed horses in the Heart of England Handicap Steeplechase, the hot favourite, Thames, about whom 5 to 4 was the best price obtainable, only managing to secure the fourth place in a field of eight.

For the last race of the day, the Border Counties' Steeplechase Plate, there were eleven starters, Lady Clare and Arbour being first and second respectively, the third place being occupied by the favourite, Schoolboy. The winner made the running from the start, and won easily by four lengths.

The weather on the first day was certainly not ideal, a strong westerly wind prevailing, with rain, sleet, and hail showers at intervals. This, naturally, somewhat marred the pleasure of a capital day's racing.

On the second day weather conditions certainly improved, but the wind still blew with unpleasant force. Still the rain, though at times appearing imminent, held off until the conclusion of the day's sport.

Racing commenced with the Dilston Steeplechase Plate, for which his very easy win on the previous day naturally made Lamb's Tail a hot favourite, odds of 2 to 1 being laid on his

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violet and white, even though he had 14lb. the best of the weights.

By a clerical error Mr. J. M. Bell's Expert was missed out of the entries for the Devil's Water Selling Hurdle Race Plate, but he was allowed to start, and as Estiferous was the only absentee out of the thirteen entered overnight, the field numbered a baker's dozen. Lollard was challenged by



Photo. by C. Hussey.

A CLOSE FINISH.

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Kirkbank at the last hurdle, and Kirkbank, staying the better, got home by a short head, Chop, three lengths away, third.

Stelling had made such a bold bid for the Yarridge Steeplechase, on the previous day, that she was, naturally, much fancied for the "Have Another Try" Steeplechase. Seven out of the twenty entered were sent to the post, and on the strength of her second to Lamb's Tail on Wednesday, even money was accepted about Mr. Hubert Swinburne's brown mare, and in the hands of that gentleman she practically made the whole of the running, and won by twenty lengths from Juventus and Little Jack.

For the Tynedale Steeplechase Plate, the starters for which included Cutty Sark and Frontier (the latter the safest "jumper" in the country, as one of his most enthusiastic admirers described him). Evidently others shared that opinion, since 2 to 1 was laid on the old horse, which was fully justified by the way in which he won from The Possible, with Cygnet a bad third. Despite his heavy impost the odds were freely laid upon Mr. Murray Threipland's horse, who made the whole of the running, and won by a length and a half.



Photo. by C. Hussey.

THE WATER JUMP.

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THE KEMPTON PARK JUBILEE.

THE fine summer-like weather, which had been so welcome at Kempton Park on Friday, lasted to the end of the meeting, and it is doubtful if there was ever a larger attendance seen there than that which assembled on Saturday to witness the eleventh celebration of the Jubilee Stakes.

Up to the time that the pen was put through the name of Bridegroom it was the general opinion that the race was a good thing for him. When, then, Mr. Calvert struck him out, and informed the public that his reason for doing so was that Clwyd had shown himself in a home trial to be the better horse at the weights, the winning of the Jubilee was evidently an even greater certainty for that horse if only, ever sceptical as racing men are, we could believe what we were told. On the first day of the meeting I was informed by a personal friend of Mr. Calvert that there was no doubt that Clwyd could beat Bridegroom at home, and that their owner looked upon the Jubilee Stakes as already in his pocket. Nor, as it turned out, for the matter of that, was this taking any too sanguine



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THE PADDOCK.

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Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

KILCOCK.

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a view of the position. I called to mind, too, that this same Clwyd, when the property of Colonel North, was a good deal fancied for this very race last year until he was put out of it by his owner's death, and yet it seemed too good to be true that the same stable sheltered two horses so handicapped that either of them could win this important stake. Private trials, too, are frequently delusive. They seldom work out right on a racecourse, although, in this case, Clwyd has the reputation of being a horse that does not run up to his true form at home rather than that of one that does better on the downs than on a racecourse. At any rate, whatever the reason may have been, Clwyd was regarded with a certain amount of suspicion by the general public, although with such credentials he naturally started favourite, and could obviously, unless there had been a stupendous mistake, only be beaten by an accident—if, that is, he was really better than his stable companion, Bridegroom, at their respective weights.

Kilcock, a great good horse, and perhaps the speediest thoroughbred in training, ran second to Victor Wild in this very race last year, on which occasion he had but 6st. 12lb. in the saddle. He was again much fancied, although his weight was now 9st. But as with 6lb. the best of the weights he only just beat The Lombard in 1895, it did look impossible for him to give Mr. McCalmont's horse 23lb. now.

Victor Wild, too, who had last year given him 3st. all but 5lb. and a three-quarters of a length beating, now only had to allow him 9lb., so that, after the way in which he turned the tables on both of these last Saturday, it must always remain a mystery how he failed to win this race last year.

Perhaps Victor Wild is not quite the same horse now as he was then, though he looked well and was backed as if he was going to win for the third year in succession, a feat he might actually have accomplished had he met with a little more luck in the race. What cheering there would have been if he had! The Lombard, too, who also looked well, and was backed at 100 to 8, was, no doubt, none the better for his accident on the way down to the post. Labrador was fancied by many, and justly so, too, although there was just the



Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

CLWYD.

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fear that a mile might not be quite far enough for him; but I never had much fancy for Red Heart, although it was industriously put about before the race that he would stay the mile, and was sure to run well—but, after all, what did it matter about anything else in the race if Clwyd's trial was only all right and he ran up to it?

In the paddock nothing looked better than Victor Wild and Kilcock. Melange, who left off at 6 to 1, is a fine commanding colt that was a good deal liked. Red Heart is a handsome horse, and looked

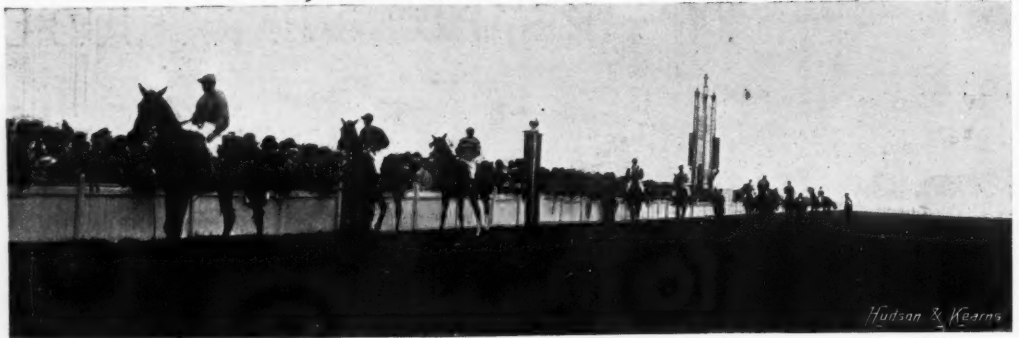


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THE PARADE.

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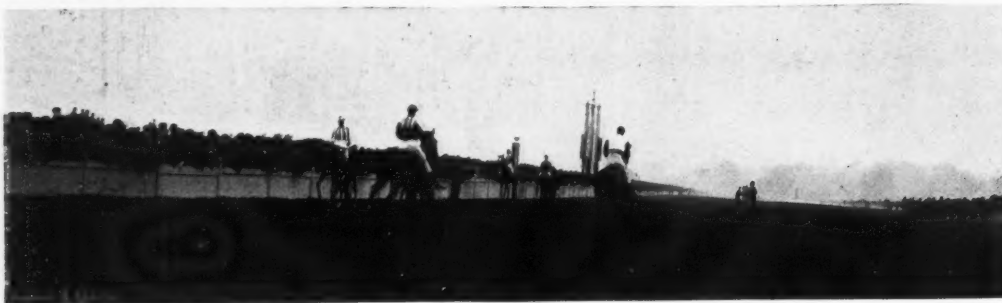


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THE CANTER.

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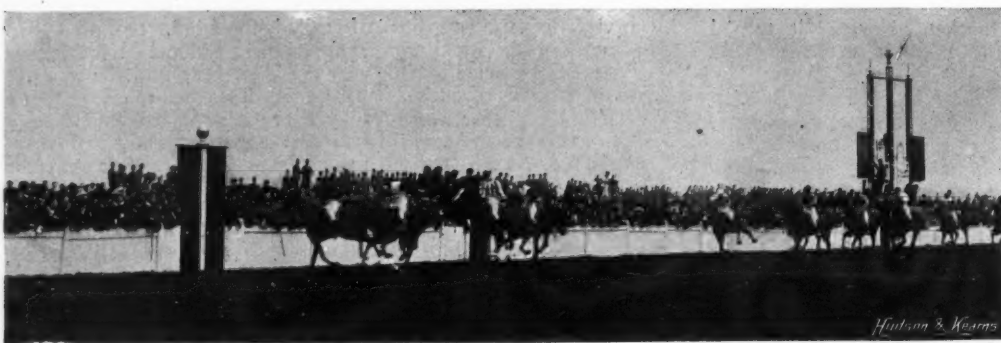


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FINISH OF THE JUBILEE.

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THE WINNER COMING BACK TO SCALE.

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well, but he had never shown any signs of staying a mile in public, and he once more failed to do so. Labrador is a charming colt, and Rampion was very fit, though I am afraid he is one of the sort that never do their best on a race-course.

As the fourteen competitors cantered to the post Hebron, Kilcock, Labrador, and Clwyd attracted the most attention, until Victor Wild turned to go down to the post, when a sudden burst of genuine cheering broke out as Mr. Worton's gallant old champion went down in his well-known resolute style, and with all his old fire and dash. Going down The Lombard hung on to the rails so persistently that Finlay could not prevent him colliding with them after going about three furlongs, and the horse rolled over, but neither he nor his jockey sustained any injury. As Finlay had, however, broken a stirrup-iron a fresh one had to be obtained from the weighing-room, which caused some delay. All this while Clwyd was becoming a more pronounced favourite in the ring, and before the flag fell it was a difficult matter to get as much as 3 to 1 about him. There was very little delay at the post after Finlay's fresh stirrup-leather had been fetched, for when once Mr. Coventry had got them into line the flag fell at the first attempt to a capital start. No sooner were they off than Hebron and Clwyd were seen to be out in front, Red Heart, The Lombard, and Kilcock being those in closest attendance on the leading pair. They came along at a rare pace, Hebron still making the running in a style that reminded me very much of the way in which Cobbler led his field to the bend in Minting's year. At one time, too, he looked like keeping in front to the end, but he tired at last, and left Clwyd at the head of affairs. At the distance both Victor Wild and Kilcock tried to close with the leader, and when last year's second had got to his neck a hundred yards from home he looked all over like winning; but the weight told at the finish—or else he cannot really get a mile—and Mr. Calvert's horse, well ridden

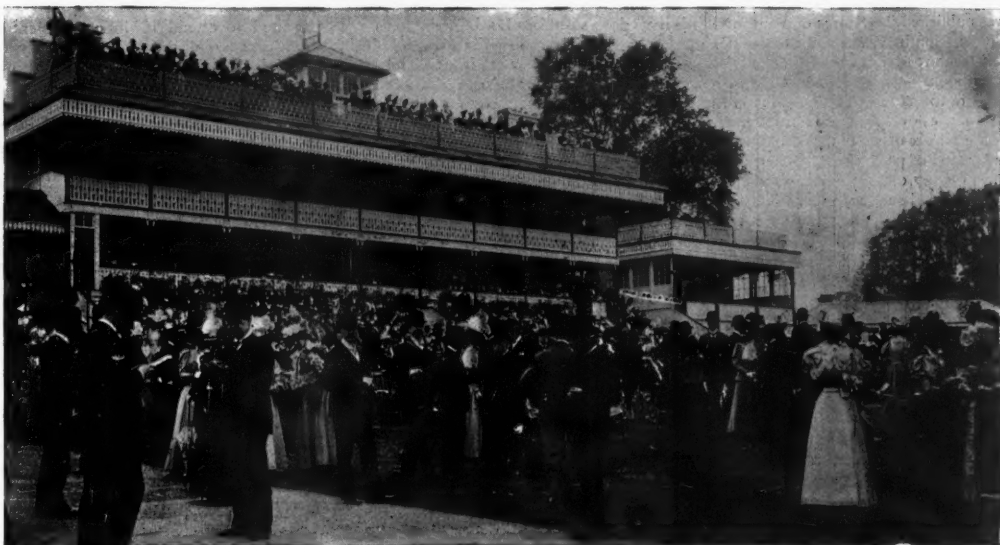
by Robinson, held his own to the end, and won a great race by a neck, with the gallant old "Victor" third, a short three parts of a length behind Kilcock. There is no doubt that the best horse on the day won the race, though he certainly had all the best of the luck, whilst Labrador and Victor Wild were both a good deal interfered with, the former especially. But the hero of the race was undoubtedly old Victor Wild, who, with a clear course, might just have landed his 9st. 9lb., and there were evidently good reasons for the way in which he was so persistently backed all over the country on Friday. The fact that under his heavy burden he was able to make such a bold bid for victory, gave increased interest to the race.

T. Y. C.

Photo. by W. A. Rorich.

THE MEMBERS' LAWN.

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BOOKS OF THE DAY.

A BOOK OF MUCH VALUE.

THIS week, the attention of readers of COUNTRY LIFE is directed to a book of the highest order of merit, written by a man who has his subject, and every detail of it, at his fingers' ends, upon a matter which goes home to the mind of everyone who is interested in that pleasant and fertile land of England, concerning which the whole agricultural community, from the territorial magnate to the most lowly labourer, is in these days anxious and distressed. Our author is the Duke of Bedford, who, under the title, "A Great Agricultural Estate" (John Murray), gives us the story, the origin and administration of the properties known as Woburn and Thorney. The result is, in the first place, a glorious record, narrated with all due modesty and reserve, of the well-doing of a great family; and in this record there is something of unique quality. True it is that other men, far away from the Fen Country, which Charles Kingsley loved so well (perhaps because he knew it not when it was true fen), have recovered lands from the submerging waters and driven back the sea by their energy and expenditure; but we question whether there is any other estate than Thorney, of anything like equal area, of which it can be said truthfully that it was made, out of nothing, so to speak, by the enterprise, the princely expenditure, and the far-seeing judgment of successive heads of a great family. But, we take leave to say that, interesting as is the history of this great estate, His Grace the Duke of Bedford has not gone through the labour of writing this book, and of collecting those imposing and instructive statistics, in any spirit of self-glorification, even assuming the world "self" to be used in a family sense, and to include those great ancestors to whom he ascribes all credit for the great and beneficent organism—for a large estate is an organism—of which he is the present head. Any suggestions to that effect—and it must be said with regret that they have appeared in print—are negatived conclusively by the unassuming modesty, the manly reserve, and the dignified self-control which are consistently characteristic of the author. It is, indeed, plain to the intelligent reader that the Duke has had the spirit of the times in his memory, and some of the popular delusions of the age before his mind, as he wrote. Studying, as every intelligent man must, the circumstances of his generation, he saw a strange state of things. He saw the great farming class suffering year by year from intolerable depression in the prices of their produce. He saw rents falling fast, and farmers none the less approaching inevitably to the brink of ruin, not only on his own estates, but upon those of his fellows of the land-owning class in all parts of the country. He perceived, as many of us must perceive, a disposition, more marked among townsmen and professional politicians than among the men whose life's work has been on the land, to rush eagerly towards unscientific and reactionary remedies. He saw rents cut down to a minimum by the Land Courts in Ireland, and tenants selling the right of occupation to the highest bidder at prices so extortionate as to cripple their successors on the land. He saw freedom of contract abolished by Act of Parliament in the crofting areas of the Highlands and the islands of Scotland. He watched the growing strength in Wales of an agrarian movement purely factitious and journalistic in its origin. Nor was it matter for surprise that these things should be. The distress of the farming class was, and is, painful to contemplate; and, when poverty comes in the door, love has companions in its flight through the window. Cool judgment and right reason, in many instances, take their departure also, and, in their sore trouble, men are willing to welcome as the deliverer him who comes forward to propose any change, however witless, and to call it a remedy. Further, in these troublous times, the men who feel their sufferings most keenly, are but too prone to listen to the voice of those persons who, actuated by selfish interests for the most part, and almost invariably endowed with a store of boundless ignorance, endeavour to provoke them to anger against individuals or institutions, to add to their misery and their hopelessness a feeling of angry resentment against imaginary oppressors, out of which feeling political capital may be made. The ease with which such feeling is excited is an unhappy fact; it is perhaps discreditable to human nature; but it is the most natural and human thing in the world. It is when we are poor that all of us, save the true philosophers, rant against the bloated capitalist; it is when we fail and are left behind in the race that we hate the successful man.

To all men in danger of yielding to their natural temptation, the Duke of Bedford bids pause; and he supports his exhortation by an impregnable demonstration, drawn from the records of his own estate. He asks the electorate and the Parliament which the electorate has set in authority to pay serious attention to a series of facts in the history of his estate, and certain traditional principles

which have been followed in the management of that estate, before rushing into new and untried schemes which, once legalised, would be irrevocable—for there is no escape from the errors of legislation—and, once established, would render absolutely impossible the application of these valuable principles. He asks the thoughtless advocates of agrarian change, which they call reform, and the unscrupulous abusers of the land-owning class, whom they describe by every term of foul abuse known to the ingenuity of man, to consider whether, in their alleged zeal to serve the tillers of the ground, they are not seeking to inflict an irreparable and incalculable injury upon those very people whom they profess to desire to serve.

Into statistical details we shall not enter here. Suffice it to say that the Thorney Estate was rescued from the watery wilderness of fen at immense expense by owners of the Bedford estates. Immense sums have been spent upon its upkeep and upon its improvement; more than £265,000 has been so spent since 1816, and more than £537,000 on the Woburn Estate. From Thorney, during the last twenty years, the average net income represents only 2 1-7 per cent. on the outlay for new works; for Woburn barely 1 per cent. On neither estate, of late, has the gross income equalled the annual expenditure. Those figures are quite sufficient for our purpose, since they prove, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the population of these vast estates, which is very considerable, would be serious sufferers, would indeed be ruined and homeless men and women, under any other system than that which prevails at present. Emphatically it is not a commercial system. "Further examination," says His Grace, "will, however, show that the system, in so far as it has departed from the principles which govern the higgling of the markets, has not been conceived or carried out in the pecuniary interests of the owner. On the contrary, the object has been to realise among the agricultural population such a standard of moral and physical well-being as would have been unattainable by strict adherence to commercial lines of administration." This well-phrased observation happens to fall in precisely with an observation made to the writer recently, in a tone of mock melancholy, by one of the most generous landlords of the kingdom, touching his agent. "He never considers my interests, nor, really, do I consider them; the interests of the estate are paramount; and the estate, of course, when you come to think the matter over, means the men and women and children who live on it."

We have not space to linger over the wise observations made by the Duke of Bedford upon cottage accommodation, though they prove assiduous care and practical judgment applied to the subject, and demonstrate that the labourers' cottages on great estates are practically philanthropic institutions; nor can we find room to follow him in his judicious notes upon allotments and small holdings, and the difficulty of making sure that the former shall be in the right hands. But a pause for a moment must be made to quote His Grace's amusing figures concerning the ultimate distribution of allotments. He shows that these do not always come into the right hands; he proves that fourteen men between them hold 178 allotments, and these fourteen men carry on the following occupations—that of nurseryman, small tenant, hay dealer, butcher, baker, publican, carter, carpenter, coal dealer, rag man, carrier, and timber dealer. To these, out of his personal experience, the writer may add that, a few years ago, out of a small batch of allotments on Lord Cowper's land, three were held by a nurseryman and publican, one by a dairyman with seven cows, one by a tailor, one by a builder, and two by a barrister-at-law. In truth, allotments which go begging, and allotments which are quite derelict, are a great deal more common than the townsman, who pictures to himself the agricultural labourer pining for land, is likely to imagine. The truth of the matter is that the agricultural labourer, while he is willing enough to criticise the methods of his master and to declare that "the land might produce much more than it do," is remarkably coy in agricultural speculation on his own behalf; and he is often heard to say, with regard to potatoes, or cabbages, or chickens, or ducklings, "It's a deal cheaper to buy 'em, than to grow 'em or rear 'em."

But we are of opinion that we shall fall into accord with the Duke of Bedford best, and interpret his true wishes most accurately, by showing that (apart from the fact that his ancestors made Thorney out of that which was without form and void) his case is far from being singular, is indeed typical. Virtually all great landowners expend vast sums of money on the improvement of their estates upon distinctly uncommercial principles, and with but little regard for the return to be expected. Deeply indebted the public ought to be to the Duke of Bedford for his most important and instructive book. It is far from accurate, it is indeed almost ignorant, to write, as has been written, that "no great landlord has ever taken the public completely into his confidence until the present volume

was published." Scores of great landlords have done so before Lord Carrington's Commission in Wales and Monmouthshire, and others could do so in England if occasion arose. Some of those Welsh cases, embalmed as they are in ponderous Blue-books—there are five of them, weighing about 5lb. avoirdupois apiece—we venture to quote. The Duke of Westminster's Flintshire estate costs more than it produces every year; Lord Penrhyn has seen no money out of his farming estate for six or seven years; Lord Dunraven has spent in improvements during his period of possession £58,000; Sir Watkin an enormous sum; Mr. Assheton Smith £307,000 odd in thirty years. This list might be lengthened indefinitely. What it and such records as that of the Duke of Bedford prove beyond a doubt, is that great estates are not commercial institutions, and that, so far as they are not managed on commercial principles, the whole benefit accrues to the tenant. Hard as times are, it is simply inconceivable that any compulsory law, passed by reasoning beings, should place the agricultural tenant in a position so advantageous as that which he enjoys on any large estate, and on a very large number of small estates, in England and Wales. And to be plain, tenant farmers are not well advised if they encourage professional agitators to examine in the matter. For the thing which is manifest and incontestable is that they do, in fact, receive an amount of help which is quite incompatible with business principles. The questions may be raised, "Where does the money come from? How can landlords afford to treat their agricultural tenants with such generosity?" We are disposed to suspect that the London householder, the coalminer, and the quarryman could supply a good deal of the answer.

Considerations of space have crowded our book reviews out. The following books may be ordered from the library:—

- "Uncle Bernie." A. Conan Doyle. (Smith, Elder.)
- "Sketches in Lavender." J. K. Jerome. (Longmans.)
- "The Sportsman in Ireland." Sir H. Maxwell. (Arnold.)
- "Rhodesia, Past and Present." S. J. Du Toit. (Heinemann.)
- "The Third Violet." Stephen Crane. (Heinemann.)
- "Sworn Allies." M. E. Le Clerc. (Hurst and Blackett.)
- "Nulma." Mrs. Campbell Praed. (Chatto and Windus.)

TOWN TOPICS.

THE marriage of Lady Anne Savile, younger daughter of the Earl and Countess of Mexborough, with Prince Louis Löwenstein Wertheim Freudenberg attracted a very smart and much interested congregation to the little Church of the Assumption, in Warwick Street, Regent Street, on Saturday morning. The decorations were very striking, the church being draped with red and white cloth in wide stripes, and the altar almost covered with red and white flowers, the Bavarian colours. The bride was given away by her brother, her father being unavoidably absent. Her dress was embroidered in diamonds and silver, and she wore a diamond crown and diamond belt. Father Hickey officiated, and on the conclusion of the ceremony, which was preceded by High Mass, he conveyed to the newly-married pair "the prayers, the good wishes and the blessing of the Sovereign Pontiff, Leo XIII." Among those present were the Spanish Ambassador and Contessa Casa Valencia, the Countess of Caledon, whose beautiful boys in their white satin p'ges' suits were much admired, Count and Countess Lützow, Lady Carew and Mrs. Clifford Cory, Sir Rupert and Lady Jerningham, Lady Dorothy Nevill, Mrs. Lyons, Miss Marie Corelli, and Mr. Eric Mackay.

A new fashion was started at the marriage of Miss Thorpe at St. Margaret's, Westminster. Her grandfather, the Right Hon. A. J. Mundella, M.P., led her up the aisle, and on arriving at the altar handed her over to her father, who gave her away to her bridegroom, Mr. G. R. Benson, a former Liberal M.P. for Mid-Oxon, and once a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. The bride's Christian name is Dorothea, and her bridesmaids carried bouquets of La France roses, these being the emblematic flower of St. Dorothea.

Amid joy blasts and lowering clouds that seemed to threaten a downpour of snow or hail, the first bicyclist meet of the Wheel Club and their friends took place at the Magazine, Hyde Park, on Wednesday, the 12th inst. The hour announced was 11.15 a.m., and by that time a considerable number of spectators had arrived, and an ever-moving throng of bicyclists kept circling around. There was a very large preponderance of ladies, the greater number of whom looked remarkably well in tight-fitting coats and skirts, with sailor hats. There were a few who ventured to appear in flower and feather bedecked headgear, with silk blouses, but the effect of such a get-up cannot be said to have been successful from the wearer's point of view, though it may have served as a useful warning, in future to avoid such a cycling costume. Three ladies in miscalled rational dress flitted for a moment across the scene, but they did not attract much attention, and were soon lost in the crowd. Amongst the onlookers there was a prevailing idea that the cyclists would follow the plan adopted by the Coaching Club at the Four-in-Hand Meet, and form into line to start off for a ride, but nothing of the kind took place, and when at noon the arbitrary policeman cleared the ground, there was a general feeling of disappointment.

The Amateur Art Exhibition, which was on view at 105, Piccadilly, for three days last week, was organised by a committee of influential ladies, and intended to benefit various East End charities which have been started by them. An exceedingly interesting collection had been made, which included three studies in water-colours by the Princess of Wales, two landscapes by the Princess Louise, and pictures by many of the most skilful amateurs. The Queen contributed an enamel of herself, as well as lithographs of herself and the Duchess of Kent, dating from the coronation year. There was a good display of Marcasite jewellery and old Battersea enamels lent by noted collectors, and some historic jewels which belonged to the famous Lady Holland and are now the property of the Duchess of Teck. The exhibition was opened on Thursday by the Duchess of Portland, and on Friday by the Duchess of Marlborough.

Dogs continued to hold sway at the Aquarium last week, but of a slightly different kind from the carefully-tended pets which were seen at the show some few days previously. The eighth annual exhibition of the London Fox Terrier Club brought together 300 of that favourite breed, and a noisy crew they were, who did not hesitate to give vent to the dissatisfaction they experienced at their unaccustomed position, the wire-haired variety being loudest in their protests against the departure from their usual life of liberty. There were several champion dogs on view, and amongst the exhibitors were the names of the Duchess of Newcastle and the Earl of Cottenham.

Tuesday's Drawing-room was smart and well attended. It was called The Princess's Drawing-room, and many of the best-known members of Society had

waited to attend it, in compliment to H.R.H. Lady de Trafford, in white, with large pink roses, and a novelty in the way of trains; Lady Sophie Scott and Lady Lurgan, both in white satin and the former wearing splendid jewels; the Countess of Glasgow, newly back from New Zealand, and presenting three daughters dressed alike in white with harebells; Baroness Burdett-Coutts, in palest grey satin and blue velvet broché train; the Countess of Caledon, in yellowish lace over chiffon, and train of pale Gobelin blue; Lady Hood, in her favourite black and white, and her pretty daughter, Lady Ashburton, also in black and white, with diamond belt and diamond ornaments; Lady Westmorland, in lace and chiffon and green scarves, with green velvet train; Lady Dunraven and two daughters; and Lilian, Duchess of Marlborough, in deep mourning, were among those who graced the occasion. Countess Temple presented her daughter, Lady Aline, and was accompanied by her sister, Mrs. Robert Dundas. The Countess of Kingston was presented on her marriage.

The Prince and Princess of Wales had a loyal reception on Monday, when they opened the Yachting and Fisheries Exhibition. The Princess looked as youthful and as beautiful as ever. The Prince took her to the large oil-painting of the Royal Yacht Club steps, and they stood for some time before it with Princess Victoria and the Duke of York, identifying the various portraits of members of the club. The tour of the galleries proved rather fatiguing to the Princess, but she good-naturedly persevered. She was dressed in black, with a ruff of black lace in which Naples violets were introduced, and her bonnet was garlanded with similar flowers. Princess Victoria wore mauve and grey striped silk, and walked with the Duke of York, who looked remarkably well and happy.

For Mr. Selous, as an explorer, a sportsman, and a hunter of big game, many persons have admiration and respect, and give to his opinions on the subjects which he has made particularly his own the weight to which they are undoubtedly entitled, but when Mr. Selous is ill-advised enough to give utterance to opinions on the political aspect of South African affairs and the future of the country, such as have recently been reported, the case is different. According to Reuter's Agency, he has given his ideas on the future with a glib frankness. "I do not believe in the establishment of a British supremacy in South Africa permanently by a British army," says Mr. Selous *inter alia*, "but consider rather that the conquest of the Transvaal Boers by a large British force at the present time would eventually lead to the overthrow of the British supremacy in the not very distant future." Mr. Selous is not a statesman or a politician, and his opinions are entitled to just as much and just as little respect as those of any other man of intelligence and education who has resided in the country who has no special sources of political information; but Mr. Selous' reputation made in another direction is world-wide, and thus his views would in some minds obtain a respect to which they are not entitled, and in any case they will encourage the Boers in their policy of arrogant defiance to this country, and hamper the work of those who have the immense difficulty and responsibility of dealing with the Transvaal Government at the present time.

FROM THE PAVILION.

ESSEX is an unfortunate county. It would have been a big thing for the team to have begun the season by beating Surrey—and they ought to have beaten Surrey, for they played the better cricket. Nevertheless, though Essex are to be pitied, Surrey are none the less to be admired, for the plucky manner in which they staved off a defeat. Abel, with his 95, was the principal saviour of his side, and Mr. Chinnery yet again proved himself most useful with 48 when it was badly wanted. Then Mr. W. W. Read, with 45, and Mr. Key, with some strong defence, made the draw safe. The result, though disappointing to Essex, leaves them with all this to the good, that they have proved themselves capable of great things. With an excellent slow bowler in Mr. Bull to balance Mr. Kortright, Mead, and Pickett, and with Mr. A. P. Lucas apparently back in his old faultless form, they ought to take a deal of beating from anyone this season. Another thing that the match shows is that Surrey are likely to feel the loss of Lohmann's bowling, or the need of some supplementary assistance in that department in the season now beginning, but it is understood that the executive went as far as they could, in reason, to induce Lohmann to help the old county.

So far, this year, there have been two days in which it has been possible to watch cricket without a fur coat; but some of the cricket has been sensational enough to keep nudity itself warm. Even so early in the season it has been shown that it is useless to try for distinction by any such score as a century; nothing less than the neighbourhood of the third hundred is worthy of consideration. Mr. Dixon, for one, cracked the record on the Trent Bridge ground, where Notts beat Sussex, with slaughter. His 268 beat Shrewsbury's previous record score on that ground by a run; but even so Mr. Dixon was not out, nor was the innings finished by several wickets. Lancashire's score of 420 against Derbyshire would have looked big, and A. Ward's contribution of 162 formidable, in any normal season; but the season, so far, is abnormal altogether. Perhaps, after all, the best performance is Mr. Druce's 227 not out—also a record score for Fenner's—for so young a cricketer: a noble captain this to lead the Varsity into battle. Mr. Jessop is good enough with the ball; yet they seem to want another bowler, though Mr. Shine did well in the match against Mr. Thornton's side. The Oxford freshmen seem an unusually good batting lot. Mr. C. E. Wright and Mr. G. H. Rowe made the best show, but all down the list the scoring was heavy. The inference with regard to the bowling is, perhaps, less satisfactory. All bowling appeared simple stuff to Prince Ranjitsinhji at Lord's—when he was at Cambridge we always styled him more "Mr.," but now that he scores centuries and double centuries he has made good his claim to a royal title. He gave the M.C.C. good exercise in fielding out for his 260. The match had a curious result, the county actually suffering defeat after all. It is said that Prince Ranjitsinhji has written a book on cricket, which Blackwood will publish shortly—an interesting event; but there is a quality in the Prince's wrists, to say nothing of his eye, by virtue of which he accomplishes those wonderful strokes off his legs, and less miraculous, but still clever enough, cuts, which one fears is not communicable. But why Blackwood—in the land of golf?

Board played a fine innings of 127 for Gloucestershire, in the second innings against Yorkshire, but it could not save the West County from a crushing defeat. Hirst and Wainwright both made centuries for the champion county. Do we want bigger wickets? After all, Surrey's 602, with a little item of 250 from Abel and an unconsidered trifle of 110 not out from Mr. Key, was the innings of a wonderful week's cricket. Poor Warwickshire!

LONG-SLIP.

Notes from my Diary

by *maire Sans-Gêne*

MONDAY: I am going to write a letter to my cousins in the country, which shall run:—

"Transparency is the leading characteristic of the materials of the moment. You can see through all the fabrics ('but not through their wearers,' says some silly male person as he reads this announcement, with a contemptuous curl of his lip usual to an unappreciative man when he hears of woman's dress). The newest stuffs are canvas and grenadine, all treated in some slightly different fashion, to justify them being called new, and it has been decided that the skirts shall be trimmed with insertions of lace, this extending in wavy lines from hem to hip, and the favourite tint of dresses of this description is coffee colour. Frequently have I met this mounted on coloured silk, more frequently mounted on silk of the same shade, when it is most successful. The prescription for making a charming frock is really very simple to-day. You take a canvas grenadine



LIGHT GOWN IN FOULARD, LACE FRONT, AND PALE BLUE VEST.



BLACK HAT TRIMMED WITH SEQUINED NET.

of an écreu tone, you mount it over silk of the same colour, and you stripe the skirt and bodice roundwards with the best quality of insertion you can possibly afford. You fasten the bodice down one side, edging it with a little frill of lace, and letting it overhang, both at the back and the front, a belt made of a few folds of coloured glacé, fastening this in front with some quaint old enamel buckle. You have the collar-band frilled with lace, sleeves striped with insertion up to a very short puff at the top, and the deed is done. You may be labelled up-to-date and taken to any festivity to pass as well dressed—always supposing that you crown the costume with a suitable hat of écreu straw lined with white chip and trimmed with black velvet, and a bunch of feathers and wings. If you want to vary your toilette—and the fates forbid that I should write to anybody who does not—buy a blue serge skirt and coat, trimming the former round the hips with three rows of braid; cut the latter in short sac bolero form, with double-breasted fronts and pointed revers, faced with écreu embroidery worn over an écreu embroidery vest. This is to be completed with a very small toque of blue and green jewelled net turned up at one side with a couple of dark blue ostrich feathers clasped by an emerald ornament, and there you have your second gown. For the other two dozen which you require please see the fashion papers, and don't bother me.—Yours always,

"SANS-GÊNE."
TUESDAY: I spent the afternoon in the "in-spissated gloom," as Johnson might have observed, of the Globe Theatre, where Janet Achurch was exploiting Ibsen. She seems to me the only actress whom Ibsen really inspires to vitality, for although another experienced person has declared that he makes actors and actresses, I always feel that he kills them. They fail to understand him, as a general rule, and chant his words in a dreary, monotonous fashion, quite melancholy to hear. Every line that Janet Achurch speaks is alive. But I wonder why it is always necessary to dress Ibsen's heroines in such atrocious clothes? Though the fashions of Norway may not be moulded exactly on those of London, 1897, there can be no possible reason

IN THE GARDEN.



THE NEW BOLERO.

for making Nora look like a slipshod slattern, in heelless shoes and unevenly kilted skirts, displaying all too cruelly the fact that petticoats are not amongst the orders of Miss Achurch's days. I wish I could persuade her to amend such ways and appear in pretty frocks. Then, if they would turn up the gas sometimes in the theatre, an afternoon with Ibsen might be more enticing to the frivolous.

If I meet another woman who confides in me that she looked the best at the Drawing-room this year I shall begin to believe in the vanity of my sex. I declare I have come across three this afternoon, each explaining, in the most graphic manner, the superiority of her own costume.

I wonder if anybody bought a lovely gown I met at Paquin's, of the palest blue brocade, with the train fringed with common garden flowers of every possible hue, the lining and the under-dress being of the faintest rose-coloured crêpe de chine, the latter hanging in kilts from a short-waisted bodice entirely made of old point lace. This was a Drawing-room gown worthy of the name. I have only seen one other this year I consider at all deserving, and this had a train of lace lined with lisse and an under-dress of lisse traced with silver sequins in a floral design. One sleeve was made of a mass of pale pink roses, the other was formed of a little kilting of the lisse, caught with a very large diamond ornament. It was a simple little frock, and must have cost about a hundred pounds, at the least. I cannot make out how people find it possible to exist decoratively through a London season without spending a hundred pounds a fortnight on their clothes. It is not to be done with distinction.

THURSDAY: I am sure Essie is mad. I have thought so for many years, and now I am convinced of it. She actually journeyed down to Chester this morning to be present at the races. I am appalled by the idea of taking such a journey to arrive at a racecourse at the end of it. Essie is nothing if she is not a sportswoman. She says she thoroughly enjoyed herself. She won some money, and added to my intense envy of her superior physique by arriving in town fresh enough to meet me at a dance to-night. She looked exceedingly well, too, in a black dress made of the finest lace, trimmed with black velvet ribbons mounted over ivory satin, and in her hair she wore a twist of black velvet holding a very superior diamond ornament and a couple of white feathers. She said she was in half-mourning for her lost beauty sleep, but really she looked as fresh as—paint, and I think she was. This is evidently to be a season of flimsy fabrics, when our day gowns are of muslin and our evening dresses are tulle, and kiltings and lace trimmings are indispensable to the success of these. There is one charm about such programme—it permits the possibility of using gowns of yesteryear. These, if made of satin or moiré, may be used as foundations, but to re-cover a frock according to the latest edicts of fashion will cost some six or seven pounds, with the necessary trimming of artificial flowers, and to-day artificial blossoms of worthy aspect involve an expenditure of two figures in shillings each bloom. The flowers which bloom on the ordinary spring millinery have little to do with the case of the best quality.



PÆONY BORDER IN A NORTHAMPTONSHIRE GARDEN.

THE TIME OF PÆONIES.

SUNNY days are asked for to bring out the Pæony flowers which keen easterly winds keep prisoners in the big buds seen in plenty now on every strong plant. The attention of readers of COUNTRY LIFE may be drawn to the charming illustration that heads this article. It represents a Pæony border in blossom, and a sweeter garden picture we have seldom seen—informal, resplendent in colour in early June, and showing how splendid are such plants when used in a simple and artistic way. The Pæony is left alone to give forth its sumptuous flowers in early summer, and if the stems are bent over the walk with the weight of bloom, so much richer the effect. Lilies, Starworts, and other hardy plants can be arranged between and at the back of the Pæonies to prolong the season of flowers. A border of Pæonies is beautiful when the young crimson shoots colour the brown earth, and at the time of flowering, then the plants get shabby, but a succession of perennials will prevent a poor summer and autumn effect. The old double crimson kind is still one of the most sumptuous, and beautiful, too, is the double blush. The lovely single Pæonies, delicate in flower and fragrance, flower before the double varieties, and require shelter from hot suns and rough winds; the flowers are more fragile than the doubles. Tree Pæonies deserve a note, but as each section requires an article to itself, the subject cannot be dealt with at length. Such growers as Messrs. Kelway, of Langport, Somerset, have an infinite variety in both double and single forms, some as sweet as a rose in colour and fragrance.

CULTURE OF THE PÆONY.

There is one great point in Pæony culture that must not be overlooked—perfect rest when once planted. Pæonies never flower well when disturbed at the root, and three or four years must elapse before a rich display occurs. Ordinary garden soil will suffice, enriched with well-rotted manure, and during dry weather give an abundance of water. They enjoy partial shade, and when planted in woodland and by the sides of drives light up the landscape with colour.

EARLY FLOWERING CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

Even in late spring days we must think of the autumn, when the garden should be as rich and lovely in colouring as the woodland. Chrysanthemums, fortunately, are now more usually seen in the open garden, and not restricted to the greenhouse as a few years ago. Many of the September and October flowering kinds are very beautiful, and planted at once, will flower with freedom at the appointed season. If the young plants have been grown under glass, carefully harden them off, and ordinary garden soil is sufficiently good.

THE BEST VARIETIES.

We have made a careful selection of varieties for forming groups of—the true way to discern the beauty of any flower. Mme. Desgranges is one of the most beautiful, its flowers white, shaded with yellow, and carried in delightful profusion. A sport from this, named Mrs. Hawkins, has all the good qualities of the parent, and is rich yellow in colour. Lady Fitzwygram, white; Roi des Precoces, bright crimson, mid-October; Samuel Barlow, salmon-pink; Harvest Home, crimson, tipped with gold; Mme. Marie Masse, lilac; Comtesse Foucher de Careil, orange-bronze; O. J. Quintus, pink; and M. Gustave Grunerwald, white, touched with pink, very dwarf, are all varieties charming in colour and strong in growth. A very old favourite of cottage gardens is Cottage Pink or Emperor of China. It is seldom seen in trade lists, but is an excellent hardy variety, bearing its pink-purple flowers until frosts stop further production. In many southern gardens this Chrysanthemum makes glorious masses of colour in September and October.

GATHERING IRIS FLOWERS.

Iris flowers are very delicate in texture, and must be carefully handled when gathered fully expanded; their life is also a short one. The correct way, however, is to pluck them when the buds are just opening, as then they expand perfectly in water. Even quite buds will expand in a warm room. A large bowl of Iris flowers is before me as I write, all gathered in the bud, and now large blossoms without a blemish.

THE JUDAS TREE,

known botanically as *Cercis Siliquastrum*, is an interesting tree flowering at the present time. The rich purple flowers appear almost before the leaves, and add a touch of colour to many an old garden wall. There are several varieties, but we care most for the purple kind. For 300 years the Judas tree has been in English gardens, having come from Southern Europe.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—With a view to assist our readers in gardening as much as possible, we shall be pleased to answer any questions addressed to us on flowers, fruits, and vegetables. A stamped envelope must be enclosed for reply.